THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA
The Divine Life Society
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India
Website: www.swami-krishnananda.org

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Though this eBook edition is designed primarily for digital readers and computers, it works well for print too. Page size dimensions are 5.5" x 8.5", or half a regular size sheet, and can be printed for personal, non-commercial use: two pages to one side of a sheet by adjusting your printer settings.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

The Chhandogya Upanishad is one of the most prominent among the major group of philosophical and mystical texts constituting one of the threefold foundation of India's spiritual lore, the tripod of Indian Culture, being constituted of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavadgita. While the Veda Samhitas are the recognised primary source of divine inspiration, their hidden intention, purported message, is supposed to be prominently revealed in the Upanishads. The Vedas are said to be capable of a variety of interpretation, – a knowledge of the *adhidaiva* or the transcendent divinity, *adhibhuta* or the created universe, *adhyatma* or the deepest subjective consciousness, *adhiyajna* or the field of action and sacrifice, and *adhidharma* or the function of law and order. Though, in a restricted sense, the *adhyatma*, in this mentioned classification, may appear as an insight into the perceiving and knowing subject as distinguished from its involvements in the objective universe and the transcendent divinity, thus categorising the Upanishads as records of inward revelations of the ancient sages, yet, the Upanishads constitute Adhyatma-Vidya or knowledge of the pure self in a wider sense, inasmuch as the self can be envisaged in the different degrees of its connotation and the many levels of its expression. God above, the universe outside, the society of persons and things in the midst of whom one's own individuality may be included, are all, in the final analysis, comprehended within the status of the Absolute Self, so that, in its broad outlook the Upanishads

may be considered as a groundwork in whose light may be studied every branch of knowledge and learning.

Among the ten major Upanishads, the Chhandogya and the Brihadaranyaka stand above others in their grand stature and majesty, these two texts being viewed by scholars as representing the cosmic and the acosmic aspect of Reality. In the Brihadaranyaka there is a preponderating emphasis on the ultra-spiritual nature of every plane of existence and stage of evolution, a rather super-idealistic sweep of all the phenomena of experience. The Chhandogya, however, tries to be more realistic in its rather matter-of-fact consideration of the issues of life. This is the reason why, evidently, there is a prevalent feeling that the Chhandogya is *saprapancha* (considerate as to the visible forms of experience), while the Brihadaranyaka is *nishprapancha* (transcendent to all available experience).

This exposition of the Chhandogya Upanishad is, perhaps, the most in-depth study ever made of its philosophical and spiritual message, and goes certainly as a companion to the author's interpretative exposition of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in a separate volume. Herein, the first chapter constitutes a brilliant study of the Panchagni-Vidya and the Vaishvanara-Vidya sections occurring in the fifth chapter of the original text. This single chapter of the book may well form a classical presentation of a grand theme for the cosmical meditations characteristic of the Upanishads in general. The second chapter expounds the great content of sixth chapter of the original, constituting the instruction of Sage Uddalaka to his son Svetaketu. The third chapter is a study of the

seventh section of the original, dealing with the majestic Bhuma-Vidya, being the teaching of Sage Sanatkumara to Narada. The fourth chapter studies the eighth section of the original, which actually concludes the Upanishad. The Samvarga-Vidya and the Sandilya-Vidya occurring at other places in the Upanishad are also included in the end as pieces of stimulating meditation of absorbing interest. The internal details of this vast study of the Upanishad can be gathered from the list of contents appended herein.

May this valuable production come as a solacing blessing to seekers of Truth the world over.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
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Chapter One

VAISHVANARA-VIDYA

THE PANCHAGNI-VIDYA

The Upanishads are mainly meditations intended to act as correctives to the binding effects that are produced by the phenomena of natural processes. While what we call a natural process subjects us to its own laws, these laws can be overcome and their imposition upon the individual can be counteracted by techniques of meditation. The philosophy of the Upanishads is that it is an ignorance of the way in which the Universe works that binds the individual to *samsara*,—the series of births and deaths. Our sorrows are, in a way, created by our own selves, because they follow as a consequence of our not abiding by the law of the universe. The affirmation of a reality independent of what really is, is called the ego. That is the centre of personality. This affirmation of individuality, *jivatva,* personality, or something separate from the organic structure of creation, is the cause of the sorrow or the suffering of the *jiva,* the individual manifested due to the affirmation of the ego. Births and deaths are the punishments, as it were, meted out to the individual in order that it may be reformed in the field of experience of the world for the purpose of enabling it to return to the normal state of consciousness which is universality of being, of which it is deprived at present due to the ignorance of its connection with the universe and a false notion that it has about its own self that it has an independence of its own.

The sections of the Chhandogya Upanishad, which we are going to study, are a gradational ascent of knowledge for the purpose of meditations which lift us above the phenomena of ordinary experience, such as birth and death and bondage of every kind, and point to the methods of transcending all sorrow, whatever be its nature, and regaining the originality of being. The various sections that follow are a systematic teaching on what we may call Adhyatma-Vidya, or Atma-Vidya, a knowledge of the ultimate Self, which is the only remedy for the malady of empirical existence.

This section which we are about to commence, is a treatise on a particular method of meditation called Panchagni-Vidya, the knowledge of the Five Fires, by which the Upanishad means the various processes of manifestation, or, we may say, evolution, it being one's bondage and the way in which the cycle of transmigration revolves. There is a coming and going, descending and ascending in this *samsara-chakra,* or the revolving wheel of bondage. How it happens, and how one can be free from it, what are the methods to be employed for the purpose of freeing oneself from the clutches of this involuntary law that imposes itself upon us and binds us to its own mandate so that we do not seem to have any say in the matter of births and deaths or even the experiences that we have to pass through,—these are our themes. The law of the universe is so vastly spread in its magnitude that it weighs heavy upon us when it is not followed. This question of the bondage of the soul brought about by its own ignorance,

and the various remedies therefore, are discussed in the various sections.

While the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is more transcendent in its approach and provides techniques of meditation which are mostly above the reaches of the ordinary mind, the Chhandogya Upanishad takes us along the path of ordinary experience, and then, finally, lifts us above into the empyrean of supreme transcendence. Often, scholars have held the opinion that the Brihadaranyaka is *aprapancha* in its view and the Chhandogya is *saprapancha,* which means to say that the Brihadaranyaka concerns itself with the ultimate Absolute and every solution is from the point of view of the Absolute only. So, it has taken the final step in setting about finding a remedy for the problems of life, while the normal man has also been taken into consideration in the Chhandogya, though the ultimate aim is the same, here also. Thus, the Brihadaranyaka and the Chhandogya form, in a way, complementary aspects of a single study.

THE COURSE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

The Panchagni-Vidya, to which reference has been made, is a particular type of knowledge, or meditation, which is introduced to know the inner meaning of the common phenomenon of birth and death. What we experience in normal life is only the effect of certain causes which are invisible to the eyes. We see people being born and people dying, but we do not know why people are born and why people die. The causes are unknown to us. What is it that compels a person to be born and what is it that forces

him to die? We know very well, we have no say in either of these ways. We cannot say this or that in respect of these processes. Nor is there any adequate knowledge of the secret of one's own experiences. Birth, death and the experiences in life are apparently effects produced upon us by causes of which we seem to have no knowledge. The Upanishad, in these meditations, tries to introduce us into a new type of knowledge which is the solution to the sorrows that are incumbent upon being subject to the laws of this natural phenomenon.

In this connection, the Upanishad commences with a story. There was a student named Svetaketu who was the son of sage Uddalaka. This student was well-read and finely educated. He was so confident about his knowledge that he used to parade his learning and calibre in the midst of all learned people, have discussions in courts of kings etc., and was very reputed for his great educational gift. This boy went, by chance, to the court of the king called Pravahana Jaivali, a noble emperor. The moment the boy arrived at the court, the king received him with respect, and after offering him the requisite hospitality becoming of a Brahmin boy well-versed in the Vedas and all the branches of learning, the king put a question to the boy.

"Are you well educated? Have you studied? Is your education complete? Has your father instructed you?" The boy said, "Yes, my education is over, and I am well-read."

Then the king put some questions. "Naturally, you are a well-informed person so as to be able to answer any pose. You are proficient in every branch of learning." That the

boy professed to be, that he would be able to answer any question. Then the king posed five questions.

The first question was: "Do you know where people go after they depart from this world? When people die, where do they go? Do you know the answer to this question, my dear boy?" The boy said, "I do not know. I cannot answer this question." Then the king asked another question, "Do you know wherefrom people come when they are reborn into this world?" The boy said, "I do not know this also." "Do you know, have you any idea of the paths along which the soul ascends, the paths being known as the *devayana* and the *pitriyana*? Do you know the difference between these two paths? Why is the one distinct from the other?" The boy said, "I do not know the answer to this question also."

Then the fourth question: "Why is it that the yonder world is not filled with people and overflowing? Always, the world is able to contain people and it is never flooded with them. What is the reason for this?" "This, also, I do not know." Now the fifth question: "Do you know what are the five oblations that are offered and how the fifth oblation as liquid becomes a human being?" "This, too, I do not know," said the boy.

Then, the king said, "Why did you say that you are instructed and well-read? How is it possible for one to regard oneself as properly educated if one cannot answer even these questions? What made you think that you are educated? What is it that your father taught you if he has not told you these things?" The boy was humbled, his pride vanished, he began to realise that there are things which he

could not understand. His education was not complete. This was the first time that he was taken aback from the conviction that he knew everything.

Though the king asked him to stay, he ran in agony back to his father. He did not stay in the palace, and in the intensity of discomfiture he rushed to the father and cried out, “How is it that you told me once that I have been instructed and well-educated, and that I have been informed in every branch of learning? This is what you told me one day. You told me that there is nothing more for me to learn, that I have completed my education.” The father replied, “Yes, what about it?” “No,” retorted the boy. “It is not like that. This fellow of a king put me some questions and I could not answer even one. Not properly educating me, you merely told me that I am accomplished.” “What are the questions?” the father asked. The boy repeated all the five questions. “These are the five questions that were put to me by the king. Now, what is the answer to these questions?” he asked the father. The father said, “If I knew the answers to these questions, naturally I would have taught them to you. I myself do not know what these mean. I have taught you what I knew, and these are things which are beyond myself, also. I have never heard of these things. So, how is it possible for me to give a reply to this query? Let us both go as students before the king. This is the only alternative left to us. We can learn this knowledge from the king himself. We have to go as humble students.” The boy said, “You yourself may go, I am not coming.” He was so ashamed that he would not like to show his face before the king, again. And so, the father went; the boy did not go.

The father humbly went to the court of the king. The king, of course, received the great Brahmin with high honour, with great respect and showed the required hospitality. Gautama stayed in the palace, for the night. The next morning, when the king came to the court, in the assembly, to give audience, the Brahmin also went there. The king said: "Revered one, ask for anything which is of this world; any material gain, any amount of wealth, whatever you need for your maintenance. Ask for it, and I am ready to give it to you. Anything that pertains to this world, anything that is human, anything that is material,—ask for such a boon and I shall give it as a gift." The Brahmin replied: "By God's grace I have enough of material wealth. I do not need anything of this world. You may keep this wealth for yourself. I do not require this wealth, but do give me the reply to the questions you put before my son. I have come to you for knowledge, not for wealth, not for any material gift which you are so kindly offering to me and which I do not need. But I want the wisdom of the questions which you posed before my son, and which he could not answer."

The king was perplexed; he was disturbed in his mind when the Brahmin spoke thus. He did not know what to say, because it is difficult suddenly to impart knowledge to a person the moment he asks for it. That is the procedure of any teacher. This is the position of the imparting of knowledge. Also, Kshatriyas do not seek Brahmins to be their pupils. That was the ancient custom. The king was a Kshatriya and now the student here is a Brahmin. Brahmins teach Kshatriyas; Kshatriyas do not teach Brahmins. So,

under those circumstances, the king did not know what to tell this Brahmin. He was a little bit concerned in his mind and was not sure as to what to tell him.

What the king could tell the Brahmin then was just this: "You stay here for some time. We shall think about it." It is believed that he was asked to stay, perhaps, for a year. That is what the tradition makes out. The Brahmin stayed there as a preparatory austerity for the reception of this knowledge. Thereafter, the king said one day: "You ask me to give you the knowledge of the things which have been set apart as a secret by the Kshatriyas up to this time. It has never gone to the circle of Brahmins till today. But, now the time has come for it to go out of the circle of Kshatriyas, because you have come to me as a student and you want this knowledge. Till now, because of this secret of knowledge which the kings held, they were predominant everywhere. They could rule over everybody due to the power that they wielded by this knowledge, and now you want to get this secret out of me." Anyhow, the king was ready, he was not reluctant; he was prepared to share this knowledge with the Brahmin, the elderly man who came as a humble student in the ordinary tradition of obedience and humility. And to him the king spoke the great truth.

Now comes the actual answer which follows in respect of every one of the questions which the king put to the boy. These answers which the king gives are certain meditations. They are processes of the attunement of the mind to higher levels of being. They are called *vidyas* because they are specific types of knowledge. *Vidya* also means a meditation, a contemplation. A higher knowledge is called *vidya,*

something distinct from ordinary knowledge, scientific or artistic knowledge, and the like.

The superiority of the knowledge arises on account of the fact of its being more inclusive in its character than all the other known branches of learning. Every form of learning in this world is isolated in the sense that it bears no connection to the other branches of learning. A person who is proficient in one branch need not be proficient in another, and, therefore, there is a limitedness of such knowledge. Our knowledge is finite; it is not all-comprehensive. Whatever be the education of a person, he cannot become all-knowing. There is something which he does not know, which keeps him subject to laws of which he has no knowledge. What binds us is the ignorance of something which exists somewhere, but about which we have no information whatsoever. Wherever there is ignorance, there is also bondage in respect of that subject or that circumstance. When we have knowledge of a thing, we are not bound to that thing, we have a control over that thing. The greater is the knowledge that we have about anything, the greater also is the capacity we have in making it subservient to our own selves. But, the more is the ignorance we have about a thing, the more are we subservient to its laws. The world binds us; the law of gravitation limits us; the law of Nature restricts us, because we do not have an adequate knowledge of these laws. We do not know how they operate and why it is that we have been made subject to these laws. What is wrong with us? We do not know this, though we know that there is something fundamentally wrong with every one of us, on

account of which the whole world keeps us in subjection. We are under the thumb of every law in the world. The reason is that we are apparently outside the realm of the operation of this law. We are like exiles cast out into the winds, and the law set around our necks, as it were, compels us to follow its dictates. We cannot overcome the law of gravitation, to give only one instance. We are slaves of this law. We can fall down and we can break our legs; we can get drowned; we can be burnt; anything can happen to us. Our very life on earth is based on and is decided by that law. But this happens on account of certain patent limitations in our life. There is some sort of a finitude in our own bodies and the entire personality of ours. Our fate is the same in respect of any law that operates anywhere. We cannot think things which are not purely sensory or physical; we cannot visualise things which are super-physical; we cannot understand any aspect of reality which is not in space, which is not in time and which is not causally related. And outside the realm of our own organic personality, we cannot have a real knowledge. We are finites, we are bound, we are limited in every way.

The processes of birth and death, again, are to be explained from this point of view. There is some law which works in some peculiar manner on account of which we are compelled to follow this course known as transmigration. Is anyone prepared to die? But we have no say in the matter. We will die one day or the other. But why should we die? Who tells you that you must die? No one knows this. And if somebody is born, well, it is doubtful if anyone is born due to the personal wish of anyone. There is some force

working behind. So is the case with every kind of experience through which we pass. We do not know what will happen to us tomorrow. So much is our ignorance, so that it appears that we are utterly humiliated beings, shamefaced in every way, ignorant to the core and completely subject to the law of forces of which we have absolutely no knowledge.

Now, the Panchagni-Vidya is a kind of remedy prescribed by way of a meditation which is regarded as a great secret by the Upanishadic teachers. Even if you hear it being expounded once, you will not be able to understand much out of it. It does not mean that you will get out of the law of Nature merely by listening to what the king appeared to have said, because they are secrets bound up with one's own personal life. To us, they are only theoretical information like the existence of a fourth dimension etc. as propounded by physics. You may hear it a hundred times, but you are not going to enter it for reasons obvious. Likewise is this Panchagni-Vidya, or even the greater still Vaishvanara-Vidya, which will follow. They will remain as a mere doctrine and exposition. To the Upanishads, knowledge is the same as being. It is practice. A thing that you live in your own personal life is true knowledge, and apart from the fact that it has to be a part of your being, it is also to be comprehensive. It should not exclude any reality or any aspect of manifestation. These two conditions have to be fulfilled. Neither can we be confident that some aspect of reality is not excluded from our purview, nor are we sure that this knowledge can become a part of our vitals. So, they will remain a mere theorem in the books. However, we can

have an outline of the knowledge which the great king imparted to the circle of Brahmins by way of this initiation called the knowledge of the Panchagni-Vidya.

As I mentioned, *vidya* means knowledge, meditation, a comprehensive insight into the nature of the reality behind any phenomenon. Now, what are these phenomena? The insight into which the Upanishad here leads us is the phenomenon of the descent of souls from the other regions into this world and the phenomenon of the ascent of souls from this region to the higher ones,—how souls descend and how souls ascend. When we consider these processes as mere events among many others, they exert a binding influence upon us. You know people are born; you know people die. This much of knowledge we do have. And, perhaps, we have also a knowledge that certain actions that we perform are responsible for our births and deaths and our experiences in life. The good that we do brings good experiences, the pleasant ones; and the bad ones produce contrary results. This much of information we have gathered by study, hearing etc. But this is not the knowledge that will liberate us.

The Five Fires, called the *Panchagnis*, mentioned here, are not actually fires in the physical sense. They are meditational techniques. The Fire, here, is symbolic of a sacrifice which one performs through contemplation. How are these sacrifices performed visibly with the traditional sense of rituals? There is a sacrificial ground; there is a sacred altar in which the holy oblations are offered through the instrumentality of the sacred fire. There is the blazing fire flaming forth from the altar in the holy atmosphere of

the sacrifice. And there is a substance that is offered, the sacrament. And certain ideas are entertained in the mind of the *yajamana* or the performer of the sacrifice, which are conveyed through the recitation of certain *mantras*. The *mantras* that are chanted or recited, in the performance of the *yajna*, or the sacrifice, are the sacred intentions of the performer expressed in language. This is the methodology of the performance of a sacrifice usually. The offerings are made to certain deities. The invocation of a particular celestial, a god, or a deity is the intention behind the performance of the sacrifice. Now, the Upanishad here tells us that the whole universal activity of creation may be conceived as such a kind of sacrifice,—*yajna*.

If we are unable to conceive the internal connection and the pros and cons and the relative relationships involved in a particular process of creation, we would not be free from the law of subjection to these forces which are responsible for this creation. Again, unless we have a practical living knowledge of the various factors that are involved in the process of manifestation, or creation, we cannot be free from the law of manifestation. Births and deaths are parts of the universal process. What we call the universal process of manifestation is inclusive of every event that takes place anywhere, in any manner, including the experiences through which we are passing here in life.

The point that the Upanishad would make out is that no event or no experience can be isolated from other experiences. Just as every performance or every item of ritual in a sacrifice is connected to every other item, the whole *yajna*, or the sacrifice is a single comprehensive act

of which the various items are only parts internally connected, the whole universal manifestation is a single process. It is a continuity throughout from beginning to end, and births and deaths and other phenomenal experiences are not isolated factors. They are connected to ultimate causes. If we can contemplate the internal connection that obtains between the effects that are visible with the causes that are invisible, then we would be free from the clutches, or the harassments, of these laws which are operating outside us.

There are various stages of manifestation. Here, a specific type of manifestation is under consideration for the purpose of meditation. How the birth of an individual takes place, how a child is born, is the actual question on hand. We are so ignorant that we think that the child is born from the womb of the mother. We know only that much, but this is the least type of knowledge that one can have about the birth of a child. The child is not pushed out of the womb of the mother, as if by magic. It is a tremendous process that takes place throughout the cosmos. All the officials of the government of the universe are active in the production of a single child's career. The whole universe vibrates with action even if a single baby is to be born somewhere in the corner of a house. It is not a private phenomenon of a little child coming out unknown somewhere in a nook and corner of the world, as people ignorantly behold or believe. The whole universe feels the presence and the birth of a single child anywhere. So what produces a child is not the father or the mother. It is the whole cosmos that produces the child. The universe is the parent of this little baby. It

may be a human baby, a subhuman one or a superhuman form. Whatever be the character of that child, even if it may be an inorganic production, an atom, or an electron, or the composition of a molecule, the birth of it is regarded as the birth of a child, and it is made possible by the operation of cosmic factors. The whole universe is our father; the entire universe is our mother; the universe is the parent. That is the cause, and even if a little liquid is jetted from a pore we would realise that, ultimately, it has some connection with the universal cause of all causes, by a chain of relations.

The Upanishad tells us this secret of cosmic interconnectedness and involution of factors which are unknown to the senses and unthinkable to the mind. There is no such thing as a private act in this world. There is also no such thing as 'my' child and 'your' child. If this secret is known, no one will say, "It is my son, my daughter." It is neither yours nor anybody's. It belongs to that from where it has come. And from where has it come? It has come from every cell of the universe. It has not come from the seminal essence of the father or the mother, as it is believed. It is the quintessence of every particle of the whole of Nature, so that the cosmos is reflected in every body. That is why we say the *brahmanda* is in the *pindanda*,—the macrocosm is in the microcosm. The cosmos is reverberating and is reflected in the little baby. How, then, can you say that it is your child? It is the child of the universe, which is to take care of it; and it shall withdraw it when it is to be summoned back; it projects it when it is to be sent out for reasons which are known to the universal law alone. Here is

the philosophical background of the *vidya*, called Panchagni-Vidya.

The Upanishad, in its exposition of the Panchagni-Vidya, takes the standpoint of the wider background that operates behind every event in the phenomena of natural processes. Things are not what they seem; there is a deeper significance behind every visible process or activity in Nature. This is the esoteric side, or the invisible aspect of the visible phase of our practical existence. It is not that events suddenly emerge out into visibility, as if by magic, and that something happens at one stroke. Take the case of thunder, for instance. We do not know how the thunder has burst forth from the clouds. There is an immediate rainfall, there is wind blowing cyclonically. The rain stops and suddenly it is hot, after it became suddenly cold when it rained with winds. These are natural phenomena from our point of view, but they are supernatural mysteries to the vision of the Upanishad. There is nothing merely exoteric in the sense of a crass material event in the world. Events take place first in the highest heaven, and then their presence is felt gradually in greater and greater density as they come down to the level of more and more grossness and perceptibility and tangibility, as is the case with a disease. The illness does not manifest itself suddenly in the physical body. It happens inside first. Its seed is sown within. There is some kind of event that is taking place in the depths of our personality, and in the recesses of the world. This impulse is manifest outside as some occurrence.

The cause of a particular event which is ordinarily regarded as normal, physical, personal, social, visible, tangible, etc., this particular thing, has a transcendent secret behind it. This is the great point made out in the Panchagni-Vidya.

The birth of a human being in this world does not take place in this world alone, exclusively. It takes place in the highest regions first. One is born first in the higher levels in certain degrees of expression, and the impact of this birth is felt in the lower levels until it becomes visible to the physical eye on this mortal earth. Then we say that a child is born, someone has come, there is a rebirth, and so on. But this someone has not come suddenly from the skies. There has been a complicated interior process preceding, which always manages to escape the notice of ordinary vision. This is the case not only with the birth of a human being, but it is so with the coming of every event in the world. The Panchagni-Vidya is not an elucidation of a single phenomenon merely, namely, the organic birth of a human individual in the mother's womb. This is only an instance which is to be extended to phenomena of every kind comprehended in the whole of Nature. There is a total activity, in a subtle form, taking place prior to the apparently individual expression of it in the form of experience and perception.

The king, Pravahana Jaivali, in his mode of instruction, speaks to Gautama, the sage, initiating him into this mystery of the Panchagni-Vidya.

"The Yonder World, O Gautama, is indeed the Fire. Here, the Sun is the fuel; the Light-rays are the smoke; the

Day is the flame; the Moon is the coals; the Stars are the sparks. In this Fire, the gods offer faith. From this oblation arises King Soma."

The activity of the celestial region may be compared to a sacrifice. It would be surprising to a novitiate, no doubt, that the Upanishad should regard anything and everything as a sacrifice. If we understand the intention behind these analogies, we would be able to realise that nothing could be a greater comparison for life than the concept of sacrifice, because the principle of sacrifice, or *yajna,* is the essence of all creative processes. And the principle is applicable to every type of creativity, whether physical, social, aesthetic, or, for the matter of that, any other aspect of life. The principle of sacrifice is that of the recognition of the higher values operating behind and transcendent to the ordinary activity of the visible world or the functions of human beings. There is a comprehensiveness of approach in the understanding of the principle of sacrifice. Every part of the sacrifice is as important as any other part, and every part of the sacrifice subserves a purpose transcendent to it, as is the case with the operation of a huge machine or a working medium in a factory. No part of the machine works for itself; it has a transcendent purpose. Look at the limbs of a human body. No organ of the body works for its own sake; it has a purpose beyond itself, and this purpose is an output in the case of a machine and an intention in the case of an organic body. So is the case with the parts of a sacrifice, and especially so when the sacrifice is identified with the creative process of the universe. Everything is

interconnected, interlinked in an organic manner, so that everything becomes as important as the other.

This concept of comprehensiveness is the secret of the meditation that is the Panchagni-Vidya. If this interrelatedness of the parts of the sacrifice is lost sight of, it ceases to be a meditation. As a matter of fact, any meditation is the attempt of the mind to bring all the parts of the psychic organ into a single focus of organic action. Just as there is a connectedness of the parts of a sacrifice performed outwardly as a ritual, there is this harmony in the inner sacrifice performed through what we call meditation. The Panchagni-Vidya is a meditation,—it is not an outward ritualistic sacrifice; it is a contemplation by the mind in which it harnesses every aspect of its force for the purpose of envisaging the reality that is transcendent to the visible parts of this inner sacrifice.

The Upanishad tells us, here, that the first vibration propelling any kind of activity or event in this world takes place not in this world alone, but in a higher realm. The cause has to be churned first in order that the effect may feel the impact of that stir in the cause. Now, the cause is not merely a single factor. There is a chain of factors involved in the conception of the cause. If, for the purpose of our study, we may say A is the effect that is physically felt by us in this world, it has a cause which is B, impelling this effect to manifest itself in that particular manner in the physical world. But, this B which is the cause of A has another cause behind it, which is C. So, we may say, that B is the cause of A, or we may say, C is the cause of A because it is the cause of B also. But, this C has another cause

behind it, and that is D. So, while D is the cause of C and B, and through these, of A, we may also say that it is the cause of the last effect also. Thus, the first cause is the real cause which pushes itself downwards to lower levels of reality, until they express themselves in space and time. This expressed form in space and time alone is known by us, seen by us, felt by us and experienced by us.

We are likely to mistake this visible effect for everything, and then it is that we are either pleased with the manifestation of an effect or we are displeased with it. Sometimes we say, "It is raining cats and dogs; it is horrible." And we say, "It is terrible, it is so hot; it is awful, it is blowing so hard." What we like or what we do not like are only the various reactions that our personalities produce or evoke in respect of impersonal causes of phenomena which have nothing to do with the pleasures or the pains of individuals.

The Upanishad takes us, for the purpose of the explanation of a small event in this world, to the highest heaven and tells us that the universe finds the cause of the lowest event in this lofty realm, in an invisible region, which is called the "Yonder World" in the words of the Teacher. For the purpose of understanding what the "Yonder World" means, we may take it to be the celestial region, regions which are super-physical, beyond even the astral realm, which are the causes of what we observe in the atmospheric region. We know very well that every phenomenon in this world is, to a large extent, controlled by the sun shining in the sky. This does not require much of an explanation. Sometimes it looks that even our very

existence itself is regulated by the presence of the sun. Our life and activity here has a cause, and we may say that the sun is the cause of life on earth. But, who is the cause of the sun? The sun is also an effect of certain factors,—we may call them astronomical or designate them by any other name which are precedent to the formation of the sun. Astronomers tell us that stars, of which the sun is supposed to be one, are formed out of the condensation of nebular dust, forming what we call the Milky Way, which form themselves into rotating and flaming masses. But why should they form themselves into such masses is beyond our understanding. They must have causes beyond. What is the cause behind the formation or the curdling of the nebular dust as the Milky Way and into the formation we know as the stars, like the sun, etc? There has to be, naturally, some vibration behind. That vibration is precedent and anterior to what we call the manifestation of even the causal condition of this world. Prior to all this, something else must be there, and prior to that, again, another thing, and so on, so that even our insignificant life in this world, in this physical body, can be said to be completely controlled by factors which are transcendent, beyond the sun and the moon and the stars, and where we go in this manner of tracing our cause back, we cannot know. We have to reach levels which are thoroughly imperceptible to the eyes and unthinkable to the mind. This is the point driven home into the mind of Gautama by Pravahana Jaivali in the context of the explanation of the Panchagni-Vidya.

In this descent of the celestial realm which has to be contemplated, or meditated upon, as a sacrifice, there are certain parts or limbs. The world, which is called the celestial realm, is itself the sacred fire into which oblations are offered. This is how the meditation is to be conducted. The fuel, which ignites the fire and causes the flames to rise up in this sacrifice, is the sun. As smoke rises from the fire in a sacrifice, we contemplate the rising or the emanation of the rays from the sun, symbolically. As the flames shine, so is the shining of the daytime due to the fire of the sun in the sacrifice. We may compare the embers, remaining after the flames subside in a sacrifice, to the moon who is something like the subsidence of the flames of the light of the sun, or we may even say, the comparison is made because moonlight arises generally when the sun's flames subside. Compare the stars to the sparks which are ejected from the flames of the fire, because they are scattered, as it were, in the sky. Now, this is a sacrificial mode of contemplation on the higher regions of the cosmos.

A mystery in this connection is mentioned here. What is our connection with these higher regions of the world? The higher regions are, in fact, not unconnected with us. The shining of the sun or the moon, the twinkling of the stars, or the blowing of the wind,—all these phenomena are vitally connected with our own life here. They are not just something taking place somewhere erratically, as if they have nothing to do with anyone. Our life is related to every phenomenon outside, and vice versa. While our way of living has something to do with the activity of the world outside, our life is also dependent on that activity. There is

a mutual dependence between the outer world and the inner life of the individual. Our thoughts influence the atmosphere. Many a time we must have heard people saying, "These days people are very bad; so there is no rainfall." What is the connection between rainfall and the goodness or the badness of people? Practically, it is difficult to understand the connection, but the connection becomes obvious and patent when we realise that thoughts and modes of living are vibrations that we set up around us. It is not some isolated activity taking place within our heads. When we think, we do not privately think inside our skulls; it is a vibration that we create in us. And the vibration of a person is not confined merely to the physical body; it emanates like an aura to a certain distance from the body of the person. The distance to which the aura goes depends upon the intensity of the aura, or the intensity of the thoughts, or the force of the vibration. This is the principle behind the advice that we must have the company of good people and not of bad people, etc., because vibrations interact. We can be influenced by the atmosphere around us. There is a vibration that is generated within every person whenever a thought occurs. Whenever we think something, whenever we feel something deeply, even when we speak something, there is a vibration generated because we do not speak without thinking. There is a thought behind every action or speech. Naturally, if we take into consideration the cumulative effect of the vibrations produced by all the individuals in the world, we can also contemplate the effect of the vibrations they produce. They disturb the whole atmosphere; they create a magnetic field

in the atmospheric realm. And the total effect of the psychic influences set up by the individuals in the world naturally influences the conditions of the manifestation of natural forces. We can obstruct their movement; we can impede their activity; we can interfere with their natural way of working, and so on.

Based on this concept of the relationship of our life with the activity of Nature outside, the Upanishad tells us that our actions are like an oblation offered in a sacrifice. Our activities are not mere impotent movements of the physical body or the limbs; they are effective interferences in the way of Nature. When we pour *ghee* or *charu* into the flaming fire in a sacrifice, we are naturally modifying the nature of the burning of the fire. Much depends on what we pour into it. If we throw mud into it, well, something, indeed, happens to the fire. If we pour *ghee* into it, something else happens. So, likewise, is the activity of the human being or, for the matter of that, any other being. The interference by a human activity in the working of Nature is an important point to consider in the performance of the sacrifice. If we coordinate ourselves and cooperate with the activity of Nature, it becomes a *yajna,* but if we interfere with it and adversely affect its normal function, it will also set up a reaction of a similar character. Then, we would be the losers.

Every action produces an effect, called *apurva,* that occurs in the process of the thought that underlies it. Actions are not merely unconnected physical movements of the body; they are vibrations, as we have observed. Every vibration impinges upon its atmosphere. It has an effect

produced in the environment, and this subtle effect that the action produces, invisible to the eyes though, is called the *apurva.* It is something newly produced; it is not already there. So, this newly produced effect, the consequence of an action that we perform, is the *apurva.* Now, this *apurva,* or the effect of our actions, has something to do with us. We are the causes. As we are the causes of this *apurva*, or the effect of the actions, we would be the reapers of the fruit of these actions. So the *apurva,* or the result of the actions, becomes the determining factor of what would happen to us even after we depart from this world. Sometimes its effect is felt in this very life. If our actions are very intense, either good or bad, the results are experienced in this life itself; if they are mild, they materialise in a later life. We offer our actions as oblations in this sacrifice of natural phenomena.

In this universal sacrifice of which the celestial region is the fire and the sun is the fuel, etc., as mentioned above, we also contribute a part; we play an important role, and that is the performance of the actions. There is a grand effect that is produced out of the performance of this sacrifice. Generally, a *yajna,* or a sacrifice is supposed to be an invocation of a god, or a deity. When we say, *Indraya svaha*, we mean that we invoke Indra. Reciting *Suryaya svaha, Agnaye svaha,* etc., we offer oblations calling the attention of these particular deities in some manner. In this sacrifice of our actions, in this life, which we offer into the great fire of the world itself, naturally, an invocation is made. We call out certain effects, we elicit certain reactions and we invite certain experiences when we perform actions.

So, our actions in this world are exactly like the offering of oblations in a sacrifice for the purpose of invoking a god, or a deity. We are inviting something, invoking something, calling the attention of something for the purpose of experiencing it when we perform an action. If the action is properly conducted it is in harmony with the natural setup of the whole sacrifice, and then the god is seen, and then we are blessed with a new type of body which is indicated here by the word *soma-raja*, a body which is nectarine in character, not merely the physical body made of the elements of earth, water, fire etc., but a body which is fit enough to experience the delights of the higher world, which are invoked into action by the performance of the deeds. This is how a person performing virtuous acts, holy deeds and charities, etc. in this world rises up to the higher world after death, and experiences the consequences of the actions until the time when the momentum of these actions is exhausted, even as we thrive well in this world financially as long as our bank balance is sound, but when it is exhausted we become paupers. We come back and we have to work hard again to fill the bank balance, so that we may enjoy life afterwards.

Something like this happens in the case of our actions. Every action has a beginning and an end; it is temporal, it has a destructible body, it is not eternal. Because it has a beginning, it must have an end. So the character of the actions, the nature of the actions, the intensity of the actions determines the extent of the consequences thereof, and when we, thus, go to the higher realm and come back, there is what we call rebirth.

The whole point of this description in the context of the Panchagni-Vidya is to tell us how births take place; what are the stages of the descent of the soul into the physical embodiment which it puts on when it comes to this world. The whole of this description is symbolic; it is very difficult to understand it with a casual reading. The teaching is not to be taken literally in a purely grammatical sense, word by word, in its outer meaning. It is highly esoteric in its technique, and the point made out is that the higher realms are activated by the consequences produced by our actions here, and those consequences of actions themselves become the causes of our descent, later, in the reverse order.

"*Parjanya* is, indeed, the Fire, O Gautama. Of that, the Wind is the fuel, the Cloud is the smoke, the Lightning is the flame, the Thunderbolt is the embers, and the rumblings of Thunder are the sparks.

"Into this Fire, the gods offer the oblation of King Soma. Out of that oblation, arises rain."

The next stage of the descent is a realm which is symbolically represented here as the world of *Parjanya*, or the god of rain. The rain-god represents the region below, grosser than the higher regions or the heavens, or the "Yonder World" mentioned earlier. That gets stirred into activity, further on. That, again, is to be contemplated upon as a sacrifice. When rain falls, it is not merely some isolated event that takes place, somewhere. Rainfall is not an unconnected activity; it is also a universal phenomenon. Many factors go to play their roles in the production of rain. There is a vibration in the higher realm first, and, as mentioned, these vibrations are, to some extent, influenced

by our own deeds here. So, whether there is a good rainfall or not has something to do with how we live in this world. This is also an interesting thing for us to understand. It is not merely something erratic that is taking place, unconcerned with what we are doing here. The lower realms, which are concerned with the production of rain, are also to be contemplated upon as a sacrifice. Every stage of development is a sacrifice,—it is a meditation. Every process of descent, and every process of ascent is a meditation for the Upanishad.

The principle of rainfall, we may call it the rain-god, *Parjanya*, is the fire in the sacrifice. The fire is stirred into action by *vayu*, the wind that blows. We consider the wind as the fuel which ignites the fire of this sacrifice. When there is such a stimulation taking place in the atmosphere, clouds are formed. As smoke rises from the fire of a sacrifice, as an effect of the flaming force of the fire, the clouds, *abhram*, forming themselves into a thick layer are the effect of this internal activity of the atmosphere by the action of the wind etc. in a particular direction. The clouds are the smoke of this sacrifice. The brilliance of the flames in this sacrifice is the flashing forth of the lightning, *vidyut,* through the clouds. We know how bright the flames are in a sacrificial altar. We have to contemplate here, in the context of rainfall, the flashing of the lightning as the blazing of the brilliance of the flames of the fire. The clap of the thunders may be compared to the embers remaining after the subsidence of the flames in a sacrifice. The rumblings of the clouds after a heavy rain, the slowed or mellowed down sounds we hear later on in various

directions, are the sparks, as it were, of this fire. We hear a little sound coming from all the quarters, or the horizons in the sky, when the rain stops and the clouds are slowly scudding. This is a contemplation that we can effect in our own minds. This is a spiritual meditation because the region of rainfall is stirred into action by the vibrations that take place earlier in a higher plane. Rain is the cause of all foodstuff. That point is being mentioned now for the intended purpose.

In this fire, the contemplative sacrifice of rainfall, gods offer the oblation of their action. The *bhuta-sukshma*, as they are called, or the subtle elementary potencies, are the *Soma-raja,* or King Soma, mentioned here. These are all difficult terms to translate and more difficult to understand. They have a highly esoteric meaning; they are not exactly as they appear on the surface. The subtle potencies which our actions produced get mixed up with the elemental potencies called *tanmatras*,—*shabda* (sound), *sparsa* (touch), *rupa* (colour), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (smell). And then it is that we get involved in the higher realms; we get vitally connected with our actions for reasons obvious, and our actions are related to the consequences they produce,—*apurva*. The *apurva* gets mixed up with the elemental subtle forces called *tanmatras*, and so we are involved in the *tanmatras* in this manner. Then it is that we are taken up to the higher realm by the rocket-like force exerted by our actions which takes us up into the higher realm after we depart from this world. These actions, these effects of actions, these vibrations that these consequences of actions produce, are a great drama indeed that takes place in the

heaven. There is a cycle, as it were, a wheel rotating in the form of give-and-take between the gods in the heaven and the human beings here. We give something and we are given back something. Nature gives us what we give to it in the form of our own deeds in this world. We do not get what we do not deserve, and we cannot get, also, what we have not given actually. What we have given, what we have deserved, what we have parted with in the form of a sacrifice, that is given back to us, with compound interest sometimes, according to the law of Nature. On account of this cyclic activity of Nature, in which the individuals get involved through their actions, there is rainfall. So, we can imagine how rains occur.

The event does not happen independently somewhere in the sky. We are also connected with that action of Nature which is called the fall of rain, or even the absence of rain. Unless there is a harmonious give-and-take understanding between us and Nature, Nature will not give anything to us. If we are too greedy, miserly and selfish, well, everything will be withheld from us. The earth will withdraw her forces. And in the Puranas we are told that the earth, which is compared to a sacred cow, withdraws her milk and does not allow men to drink a drop of the milk of her giving, when they are so selfish, self-centred and absolutely averse to the virtue of giving or sharing with others. It is then that we notice an adverse action in the field of Nature. And then there is drought; there is poverty; there is catastrophe; sometimes there can be cataclysm also, as the case may be. So, the rainfall, which is the cause of the production of food in this world, is not a chance action taking place in Nature,

but one of the important links in the cyclic chain of give-and-take, or coordination and cooperation between the individuals and the whole of Nature.

"The Earth is, indeed, the Fire, O Gautama. Of that, the Year is the fuel, the Sky is the smoke, the Night is the flame, the Quarters are the embers, the Intermediary Quarters are the sparks.

"Into this Fire, the gods offer the oblation of rain. Out of that oblation, arises food."

Rain falls on this earth. The earth, as the fire, is itself an object of meditation. We contemplate the whole earth as the fire in another stage of the Cosmic Sacrifice. The earth is a sacrificial fire. The productive capacity of the earth depends upon another factor, viz., the cyclic changes produced by the process of time. The time factor has an important part to play here. What we call time, of course, for the purpose of our understanding, may be compared to the effect produced by the rotation of the earth on its axis and the revolution of the earth round the sun, and the effect that the sun produces, consequently, upon the earth. This is the essence of time for us, and this is what is called the *samvatsara*, or the year in popular style. The year is the time factor involved in the capacity of the earth to produce foodstuff. And because it is the inciting factor in the production of foodstuff in the world, it is called *samit*, or fuel, for it is what causes the blazing of the fire of the sacrifice. How do we contemplate, then? Just as smoke rises up from the fire, we contemplate the whole sky as if it is a dome that is rising from the earth. When we look up, it appears as if the sky is rising dome-like above the earth, and

we may contemplate as if it is a smoke rising from the fire of the earth. And, as flames rise from the fire in a sacrifice, the fire is the cause of the rise of the flame, the particular phenomenon called night,—we may include the day also together with it because the two are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin,—is the result of a particular activity of the earth. We know why there is night and why there is day. This happens because the earth does something. Inasmuch as earth is the cause of the event called night and day, even as the fire is the cause of the rising of the flame, in this contemplation we are to regard the night and day phenomena as the flame of the fire in the sacrifice. The quarters are the embers, because they are calm and quiet, undisturbed as it were, by the movements that take place in the world. When we look at the horizon, we feel a sense of calmness, as if the earth is not touching it. So, it is the subsidence of activity, like the embers after the flame subsides. Like sparks from the fire, which move in different directions, we have the intermediary quarters of the heavens which are in different directions, which are to be contemplated as if they are sparks in the sacrifice. The intermediary quarters are of lesser importance and, therefore, they are called the sparks.

Here, on this earth, rain falls by the activity of the gods. The gods are the presiding deities of the senses. There is connection between our sense-activity and the gods in heaven. In this offering of the great sacrifice, contemplatively conceived here by this process of the fall of rain, there is a productivity created in the earth and

foodstuffs are produced, for another purpose, which will be mentioned further on.

The Celestial Region, the Atmosphere, the Earth, Man and Woman,—these are the five stages of the Fire which becomes the object of meditation known as the Panchagni-Vidya. By the interconnection, combination and harmonious adjustment of the structure of these five levels of manifestation, birth takes place. This symbology of the birth of the individual through the Five Fires is applicable to the birth of every event and every form of expression in the world, whether it is what we call a living being or the manifestation of the other levels, such as the inorganic etc.,—the physical, the superphysical, or otherwise. The theory is of the manifestation of anything, anywhere. There is a universal concatenation of causes and effects coming together from every side, like the rush of waters in the ocean, from every corner, in order to make the waves rise on its surface. The cooperation of the structure of the waters in the body of the ocean is necessary for the welling up of the waves, though this may be only a local effect whose ulterior causes are not visible to the naked eye. There is, thus, in the end, no such thing as a local event in this world. Every event is a universal event. So is the case with the birth of even a human individual. Every birth is a point of universal pressure.

The philosophy of this *vidya,* the Panchagni-Vidya, is that such is the meditation of these processes. We should not regard anything as a local event, local structure, local body, local individual. These do not exist; and the idea that they exist is the source of bondage. We are bound by our

erroneous notions of things, not by the things themselves, but the wrong idea we have about their relationship mutually or to other things. We have notions about things based entirely on sense-perception, not on the intuitional insight into the background of the occurrence of events. What do the senses tell us? They can report exactly what they can abstract concretely in the form of bodies of perception from the vast reservoir of information. The reservoir, as a background, is unperceivable to the eyes, not even cognisable to the ordinary mind. But the meditation proposes to introduce a technique of envisaging the whole universe as responsible for the manifestation of everything, so that *everything is all things, and anything is everywhere*. There is no such thing as a particular individual or a particular body. This is the meditation which frees us from the bondage of attachment to particular things. If this meditation could be conducted effectively throughout one's life, there would be a universal perception of everything. When you look at any particular object you will see the whole world in it, and not merely one person in front. There is no such thing as one person; that does not exist. The description of the causes with their effects, in these passages of the Upanishad, is therefore intended to take us above the level of ordinary sense-prerception and open the gate of a new knowledge altogether, behind the visible effects which are the so-called objects of sensation, perception and cognition.

Bondage is due to the connection of our consciousness, or the soul, we may say, with the report of the senses, which is confirmed by the activity of the mind and the intellect.

The mind, the intellect and the senses work together in collaboration in giving us a wrong idea about things. The first mistake is committed by the senses. The mind and the intellect only corroborate and confirm in a more synthesised manner this report of the senses. The report is wrong in the sense that it does not take into consideration the invisible factors involved in the production of an effect. The clouds do not gather in the sky suddenly. There are many causes which are beyond one's comprehension, which come together into action for the production of a single effect called the appearance of the clouds in the sky, and the fall of the rain, etc. So is the case with everything. So is the case with anything that happens anywhere in the world; so is the case with anything that appears as an effect or a person in the world; so is anything, whatever anyone can think of in one's mind this world.

These are the oblations symbolically offered in the sacrifice of meditation called the Panchagni-Vidya. This is a secret which the Kshatriyas knew and the Brahmanas did not know. King Pravahana Jaivali was reluctant to part with this knowledge because it was a guarded secret for him and for his community. And now he exposed this knowledge to the Brahmana known as Gautama who came to him as a student, and having explained in detail these mystical doctrines of meditation,—the Panchagni-Vidya,—he concluded by saying that the food oblation offered in the Fire of Man, which gets converted into the seed, is what rises up as the child by birth. This was one of the questions the king put to the boy who approached him in the court.

The first oblation is the universal vibration in the celestial heaven; that is the first sacrifice, and that is the first oblation. The second oblation is in the second sacrifice which is the reverberation of the vibrations in the celestial region felt in the lower regions of the atmosphere, as the fall of the rain. The grosser manifestations which are the events that take place in this world are the third oblation. The fourth sacrifice is of man himself, who is involved in this entire activity, who consumes the food of the world and energises himself and produces virility. The fifth oblation is woman whose union with man brings about the birth of a child. These are the Five Fires. These Fires are not to be regarded as individual events. This is the purpose of the *vidya* in the Upanishad. The Fires so-called are diviner manifestations of a cosmic character, and there is nothing local, physical, earthly or binding in any of these sacrifices. They are all processes of a vaster Nature in which the individual is integrally involved. The conception of the entire process should therefore be one of a Universal Occurrence, and by an extension of meaning, this is at once a description of events taking place in any manner, apart from the particular ones mentioned specifically in these enunciations, in these passages.

The fifth oblation is the immediate cause of the rise of the effect in the form of the baby that lies in the womb of the mother. Here, the womb of the mother need not necessarily mean the human mother, though the description is human, to serve as a sample of the illustration. Any cause which gives birth to an effect is the mother that produces the child. Now, in the case of the

human being particularly, the child lies in the womb for some months, say nine or ten months. It sees the light of day and begins to see things through the senses. It begins to work in the world as an individual, so-called. Then it lives in the world for so long as it is permitted to live by the momentum of its actions of previous lives.

There is a determining factor of the span of life of an individual even when it is in the womb of the mother. It cannot be increased or decreased; it is set for ever by the particular force of the *apurva*, mentioned earlier, which becomes responsible for the birth of an individual. There are causes and causes. All of them join together and pass a resolution, as it were, in their meeting, as to how long an individual should live. That is determined by the character of the cumulative effect of the actions known as the *apurva,* part of which alone is allowed to manifest itself as what we call *prarabdha-karma* (force which has already fructified into experience). The *prarabdha* is the cause of everything that we experience in this life, the length of life, the nature of the experiences through which we pass, the circumstances into which we are born, etc. All our pleasures and pains, including length of life, are determined by the actions we performed earlier, portions of which are allotted for experience in this particular life, that portion being called the *prarabdha-karma*.

Just because a person is born into this world, it does not mean that he is dissociated from the prior causes, ultimately. The causes catch hold of the effects at every level. They can never be freed from connection with their causes. Even when there is a descent into the lowest level,

the connection with the higher levels is not snapped. It is always there. We may be said to be aberrant from the realm of God in a sense. We have cut ourselves off from the Universal Being, due to which we are supposed to be bound souls, but it does not really mean that we have severed our connection with God. Our connection still is maintained with everything; with other beings, with Nature, and with God. What has happened is that we are unconscious of this existing connection. The connection can never be broken; it is a perpetual relationship. If it had been temporary, it would not be reinstated once again. It is always there, but we are completely oblivious of the presence of this relation. Such is what happens at the birth of an individual who is completely ignorant of what has happened. Causes and causes, perhaps thousands and thousands in number, have joined together through the various levels of manifestation for the birth of this child, all of which is not known to this child. It knows nothing except the little locality where it is born, and all other aspects of its birth in this particular world are forgotten at one stroke due to the association of consciousness with the body in a very intensified manner. The intensity with which the consciousness gets tied up to the body is such that there is a complete obliteration of the memory of past lives, a total ignorance of everything that happened in the earlier incarnations, and there is an attachment to this particular body only, as if that is the only reality,—as if there was nothing before, and there is nothing going to be in the future also! Unfortunate situation, indeed, is this, that nothing is known about the past and nothing is going to be known about the future. The entire

chain is forgotten. Only a single link is caught hold of, and consciousness is bound hard to this particular link, and this is the earthly, the physical life of the individual.

When the span of life is finished, there is what we call the death of the body, the extrication of the *prana* from the individual embodiment. And these Fires take the individual to the destination to which it is bound after death. Again, these Fires are there in action; they are never absent at any time. Wherever you go, the law of the country works; you cannot escape the arms of the law. Just because you have moved away a hundred miles, it does not mean that you are free from its operation. Likewise is the operation of the Five Fires. Wherever you go, they are there, because, without them nothing can take place. The Five Fires are nothing but the five degrees of the manifestation of universal law. So, how can you escape it? Wherever you are, in whatever realm, in any form of birth whatsoever, these laws operate, and they catch hold of you, and condition you to certain limited forms of life.

In the same way as one was pushed into manifestation into this particular life, one is put out of existence here, and then taken through the same process of manifestation into other realms. The process is the same, because the Five Fires work everywhere in all the realms of being.

Those who know the secret of this Panchagni-Vidya, those who know the doctrine of the Five Fires, those who conduct their lives through meditation in this manner, are liberated from the bondage of *karma*. They pass through the stages of ascent leading to the higher regions of life, ultimately landing in *Brahma-loka,* or the realm of the

Creator, for the purpose of ultimate liberation, or salvation; otherwise, there is return, once again, by way of reincarnation, or rebirth. If you are not to be reborn into this world of suffering, you cannot live like an animal, thinking like an animal, living like an animal, seeing like an animal and living a conditioned existence in the same way as animals live in the jungle. Ignorance of law is no excuse. You shall be punished with the rod of the inexorable law for any ignorance of its requirements, and ignorance is nothing but the inability to visualise the connection that obtains between us and the various causes of our manifestation throughout the universe. Since no one can claim to have such knowledge, it appears that everyone is bound to reincarnate in some form. This is the pitiable consequence of the ignorance of the *jiva*, the individual, to which reference will be made towards the end of this section. But those who are fortunate enough to be awakened to the fact of this divine connection of human life and meditate in this manner through the Panchagni-Vidya,—they shall be taken to the higher regions by diviner forces, through the Northern Path, or the *uttarayana-marga*, the path of light.

The *archiradi-marga*, or the *devayana*, the Northern Path of the gods, of the celestials, the path of the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of *samsara,* is being described. Those who meditate like this, those who live the spiritual life of knowledge, those who have an insight into the secret mentioned here in this Upanishad, those who practise austerity (*tapas*), endowed with the great faith (*shraddha*) in the efficacy of this knowledge, they rise to the realm of the divine *Agni*, or the deity of fire, on departing

from this world. They are carried to a higher realm by the deity of the flame, or fire, and from there they are taken up to the still higher realm of the deity of the day. There, again, the matter does not end; they go higher up to the realm of the deity which superintends over the bright half of the lunar month. From there, again, they go higher up into the realm of the deity of the six months during which the sun moves to the north. Then they go higher up to the deity which superintends over the entire year. Then, further, they go to the sun, which is a very important halting place, as it is said, in the passage of the soul to liberation. Then the soul goes higher up into the more subtle regions of experience and enjoyment of a divine a nature, comparable to cool lunar radiance. Then comes the realm which the Upanishad calls the flash of lightning represented by its deity. This is not the lightning that we see in the sky, but the flash of the lightning of the knowledge of Reality. We are on the borderland of the Creator, as it were. There the light flashes and then the individuality is about to drop. Effort ceases there and some other law begins to take the soul by hand. A superhuman force begins to work there, an *amanava-purusha,* a superhuman being comes there. Someone comes and recognises you, "Lo, the exiled has come, the prodigal son has returned." Such is the joy of the gods when this exiled being returns after years and years of suffering. The superhuman being catches hold of you by the hand and leads you along the path of light, higher and higher, until you are taken to the realm of the Creator Himself, the *Brahma-loka*. This is the path of light; this is the path of freedom; this is the path of liberation.

But, if people are unable to live such a spiritual life, cannot live a life of meditation like this, have no knowledge whatsoever of the higher truths of life, then, though they have done yet some good deeds in this world, they are good persons, very charitable, very philanthropic, very serviceful, have done a lot of social welfare work of public utility, with the virtues which are highly praised in the scriptures, and have accumulated the merits of what are known as *ishta* and *purta*, i.e., performing great sacrifices and philanthropic deeds of various types,—such good people who have accumulated merit by means of virtue here they do not go along the path of light. Rather, they go along the Southern Path of return. This is called the path of smoke, or *dhuma-marga, dakshina-patha,* or the Southern movements which is, again, presided over by divinities. From the deity of the smoke there is a rise of the soul to the deity of the night; then to the deity of the dark half of the lunar month; then to the deity of the six months during which the sun moves to the south. Then what happens? It does not go to the realm of that deity which superintends over the year. Especially, this mention is made here, and this is something mystical and peculiar. Why do they not go there? One thing is missed there. This is the departing place of the two paths. For some distance they go together; afterwards they depart, one goes to the North, another goes to the South. The juncture is the deity of the year which is not touched by the soul that goes to the southern regions.

From there, the soul goes to the world of the fathers, not to the sun. Then, from there it goes to the realm of space, *akasa*; and from there to the moon, *Chandra-loka*. In

Chandra-loka, it is supposed to enjoy the privileges of the gods, yet like a visa-holder, not being a citizen of that region, and so it is subject to return. It is subservient to the gods who are gods by birth. The gods that are gods right from the time of creation are superior to the gods that have become such temporarily on account of the virtuous deeds performed in this life. So, when the meritorious deeds are exhausted, the soul returns. It cannot live there permanently. It is subservient, being a celestial of an inferior category. The soul, here, is not for the citizenship of this world, though it has got all the privileges of enjoyment and living. You can have the same boarding, same lodging, and everything, but no privileges or rights! This is because of the fact that you are temporarily raised to the status of a celestial on account of the good acts that you have performed. But when the momentum of the acts finishes there, then what happens? You are, once again, the poor man that you were; you come back in the same way as you went. And so, even when you go there you are not on par with the gods who were there right from the time of creation. On account of this fact, it is said that the soul there is like a food, as it were, to the gods; it is eaten by them, which means to say, it is subservient to them and they are superior to it. As long as you are permitted to live in the celestial region by the momentum of the good deeds that you performed in this world, so long you live there. Then you come back through the same path you went. You will be hurried back. The soul comes back to the space through which it rose up; then it comes down to the realm of air, with which it gets identified very subtly. Then it

comes down to the levels of smoke, the clouds and the rain. And one knows the whole process.

These souls which are to return to the mortal world get identified in a subtle manner by their subtle bodies through these natural phenomena, viz., space, air, cloud, rain and foodstuff, even up to the grains like sesamum and barley, beans, rice and wheat, herbs, plants and trees, etc. It is very difficult to understand how they get mixed up with these things. In a very subtle form, these souls are supposed to get identified with these natural things. And they get into the body of the individual through the foodstuff with which they have been identified. Then the same process of birth takes place. The individual soul has come from the above, after finishing its career of enjoyment due to the performance of good deeds here. The soul gets identified in every manner, in every way characteristically, with the particular level through which it has to pass. It is difficult in get out of this existence, says the Upanishad (*Ato vai khalu durnishprapataram*). Once it enters into these lower levels of grain, foodstuff, etc., one cannot say what will happen to it afterwards. Perhaps God knows what happens; ordinarily this secret cannot be known. It is a very complicated situation. Where will the soul be driven, in what direction, into the womb of which mother, for what type of experience, no one can say. The way of action and reaction is difficult to understand. The descended soul gets identified with these levels; it becomes one with the father, one with the mother, one with the social life into which it is born. And then it begins to say: "This is my mother; this is my father; this is my house; this is my property." It forgets

everything that happened earlier. It really belongs to wider regions; it has many friends in the other realms of being,—it is a citizen of a vaster world, but it has forgotten all this like a foolish individual, an idiot of the first water. It begins to identify itself with a little locality, a small house, a village, or even a thatched hut, and says: "This is my property." And it has no connection with anything else. Very pitiable existence indeed, says the Upanishad. What happens then?

People who have done good deeds are born in favourable circumstances. This is the law of *karma*. The happiness, the freedom and the satisfaction that one experiences in life are due to some good deeds performed earlier, especially unselfish charitable deeds. The more you give, the more also will you receive. This is the law of action and reaction. You cannot get what you have not given. You cannot expect happiness here if you have not given happiness to others in an earlier life. If you are a greedy person, a miser who has grabbed the happiness of others and enjoyed everything for your own self and put others to grief and sorrow,—that would be your fate also in this world. You would be a sufferer. You may be a poverty-stricken individual, and you may be a pauper having nothing, as the result of your selfish deeds in the previous lives. You have grabbed things from others, and therefore you are deprived of things in this life. But if you have been charitable, broad-minded, good-hearted and amiable, philanthropic, serviceful, that would be the same experience you will have in this life also. You would be given back the same thing that you have given to others. If you have given joy to others, joy will be given to you here. If

you have given sorrow to others, sorrow will be given to you. So, the type of birth you take in this world, and the conditions of your existence here are all determined by what you did in your earlier existences. You may even be born as an animal, says the Upanishad, if the *karma* is very bad. This is what happens to the individual when it takes birth in a particular world, or in this world. Thus is, therefore, the cycle or the rotation of the wheel of *samsara*, the going up and coming down in the circle of transmigration. There is only one path moving along which there is no coming back. That is the *devayana-marga* mentioned above. The other path brings the soul back.

There is another kind of birth, says the Upanishad, which is not connected either with the Northern Path or the Southern Path. It is the birth of small creatures like insects, such as flies, gnats. They live for a few hours and pass away. In the rainy season you will see moths and small insects rising up from the damp earth and then dying that very day, sometimes even in a few hours. This is another kind of birth. Hard is life, indeed! Their life is so short, of such an insignificant duration that one may say that they are born and then dead. When you are seeing them being born, they are dead also at the same time. So short is the life of these creatures. This is the third way of being born and living, other than the life which we live through the Northern and the Southern Paths. Why is this world not filled up with people, and why is this other world also not filled up by people even if many people die here? The answer is given here that there is a cycle or rotation of people. They go from this realm to that realm, from that

realm to this realm, so that no world is completely filled to the brim or overflowing.

"One should get disgusted with this life," says the Upanishad. You must be having enough of this life. Who wants to live like this, in this manner, where you are subjected to the law over which you have no control and regarding which you have no say whatsoever, where you are always a sufferer, always in a state of liability, and you do not know what will happen to you the next moment. Is this a life worth living? This is not life, but a form of unbelievably torturous mortality. Oh, what a life is of this world!

Ignorance breeds further troubles in the form of likes and dislikes, selfish actions and their consequences which bring about a birth of this kind, and eventually sorrow. In this connection it is said, in conclusion, that those who live a life of spiritual meditation are not affected by this law. This is a solacing conclusion that the Upanishad gives. You are affected by the law when you cannot understand the law. A person who knows what law is cannot be harmed by law. This is the case with any kind of law, whether it is governmental law or the law of electricity or the law of social life or the law of the spirit. It is ignorance of the way in which law works that binds us to the operation of the law. If we are thoroughly conversant with the intricacies of the working of the law, naturally we will abide by that law. And why should we be bound by it or harassed by it, or punished by it? We do not know how the law works. The whole difficulty is here. So, we cannot even abide by it. How can one abide by a law of which one has no knowledge? So,

ignorance is the real trouble; every other trouble is subsidiary and an offshoot of it. One who knows this truth of the universe, is free from every sin and trouble.

Now, here, the words "one who knows this" signify something that occurs again and again in the Upanishad. We should repeatedly mention here that "one who knows this" does not mean one who has read the Upanishad, or one who has read it and understood what it says. No, not like that. Here, in the case of the Upanishad, knowledge means 'life' itself. It is 'living'; it is the extent to which this knowledge has become part of one's life. This is the knowledge that we are speaking of here in the Upanishad. *Knowledge is being*; this is the central philosophy of the Upanishad. This we cannot forget, when we study the Upanishad. *Knowledge is life; knowledge is being, knowledge is existence; knowledge is what you are*. So, what you are determines what you shall be in the future. And, if yours is a life of knowledge in the sense mentioned here, if you are an embodiment of this wisdom, if you are scintillating with the brilliance of this understanding, even here as a part of your own vital existence, if this knowledge is what you yourself are made of, if this knowledge is the very substance of your life, not merely an intellectual information, then you are free from the bondage of action. Then these laws of the world will not act upon you, because these laws are nothing but the expression of knowledge which is the nature of the ultimate Reality, finally. So, to the extent you are identified with the character of Reality, to that extent you are free from the law of *karma*, or action. *Karma* is the name we give to the way in which the law of Reality acts

upon all particulars or individuals, reacts upon everyone and everything, when one is in a state of ignorance. To the extent of the percentage of the law of which you are ignorant, to that extent you are bound. And to the extent you are aware of it and live it, and are able to abide by it, to that extent you are also free.

So, one who knows these Five Fires is free. It is difficult to know these Fires unless we live a life of meditation. Your whole life should be one of meditation. Perpetually, we must be seeing things in this light only. Our meditation should not mean merely a little act of half-an-hour's closing of the eyes and thinking something ethereal. It is a way of living throughout. When you see a thing, you see only in this way; when you speak, you speak from this point of view; when you think, this is at the background of your thought. So, you cease to be an ordinary human being when you live a life of this Upanishad. You are conditioned by this great knowledge, and it becomes, therefore, a liberator of your soul. Even if you are in the midst of atmospheres which are otherwise not desirable, you shall be free from contamination, says the Upanishad, because no such things as the undesirable exist for such a person. The knower becomes coextensive with the way in which Nature works in all its ways. And everything is Nature working in some way, the desirable as well as the undesirable, as we may call it. We become commensurate with the way in which Nature works in every way because of the meditation conducted in this manner. Thus, we cannot be harmed by any atmosphere, by anyone or by anything that is around us. On the other hand, perhaps, we may be able to influence

positively the atmosphere in which we are living. "One who knows this," reaches the higher realms reached only by meritorious deeds; *"ya evam veda";* yea, "One who knows this."

This section, dealing with the Panchagni-Vidya, is partly a description of a lofty type of meditation, so that we may live in this world without being bound by the laws of the world, and after death go to higher regions for the liberation of the spirit, ultimately. Partly, also, it is a light thrown on the fact of the misery of life. There is a side of things apart from the fact that there is a cosmical aspect involved in every working of Nature. Life is sorrow; life is full of misery. It is full of grief and pain, because one is living in a state of ignorance. The Upanishad on the one hand extols the greatness and the glory of knowledge which leads to the liberation of the soul, and on the other hand tells us how hard the laws will descend upon us and put us to the subjection of their mandate and requirements, and what sorrow will come upon us, what would be the unhappy state to which the soul would be subjected if it is deprived of this knowledge and lives merely a life of utter ignorance.

VAISHVANARA, THE UNIVERSAL SELF

In the course of the study of the Panchagni-Vidya, it has been incidentally pointed out that there is great sorrow in life if it is attended with ignorance. Ignorance is the cause of suffering because it breeds erroneous action towards motives which are wrongly directed. This is the cause for the transmigratory cycle of the soul, which can be

put an end to only by proper meditation on the inward structure of the Universe in its essential nature, and not as it appears to the senses in ordinary life. The birth and death of an individual, the process of reincarnation, the impulsion to action propelled by desires and the compulsion to restrain the consciousness within the four walls of one's own body,—all these are aspects of the bondage of the individual. Life is an essence of bondage, a prison-house, as it were, because of a very complicated type of nescience, or ignorance, which has enmeshed the phenomenal existence of the *jiva*, the individual. There must be some remedy for this state of affairs. Is there not a way of freedom? Are we to suffer only in this manner, subjected to the law of transmigration, conditioned by the law of cause and effect, and having to pass through the ordeal of this life in which no factors there seem to be over which we have either any control or of which we have any knowledge? With a view to expound a doctrine of freedom, or the liberation of the spirit from the bondage of *samsara,* the Upanishad embarks upon a new subject subsequent to the exposition of the Panchagni-Vidya. The new section will be confined to the elucidation of the renowned meditation known as Vaishvanara-Vidya. In this context we are introduced to an anecdote, or a precedent story.

There were five wise people learned in sacred lore, all great meditators, performers of sacrifices, but who could not come to a conclusion in regard to the final destination of their meditations. These great men are named here. Prachinasala Aupamanyava, Satyayajna Paulushi, Indradyumna Bhallaveya, Jana Sarkarakshya, Budila

Asvatarasvi; these are the great men. They were all lofty meditators according to their own techniques, but they had doubts in their minds, because in the course of their meditations, in spite of the fact that they discovered a palpable result of a magnificent nature, there was something lurking in their minds, pointing to a defect in their meditations. And they could not know what was the defect. So, they conferred among themselves: "What is Atman? What is Brahman? What is the difficulty with us? Can you enlighten me?" Each one was questioning the others: "What is the proper course? Is there a possibility of bringing about a harmony among our meditations?" Each one was meditating in a particular manner, and each one was a great person with grand results following from the meditation. In spite of these happy consequences of their meditations, they had different techniques altogether, one not agreeing with the other. And they had a suspicion in their minds, "Why is it that there is no agreement among ourselves? There must be some peculiar point which escapes our notice. We all meditate on the Atman, the highest Reality of things, as the Self of beings, the Supreme Absolute which is Brahman. In spite of this endeavour of ours, there seems to be something irreconcilable among our methods of meditation." And then they conferred among themselves, but could not come to a conclusion.

Then they thought, "Well, in our locality is another great man. Why do we not go to him? Perhaps he knows this secret of the Vaishvanara-Atman. He is Aruni Uddalaka, the great sage of Upanishad fame. Let us go to him." "Well," they said, "this is a good idea, we shall all go

to this great man and put our questions to him if he can enlighten us and tell us what is the difficulty with us, what are the defects in our meditations, and what would be the proper procedure." So, they all went to him in a group, to raise a query on this subject.

But it was a surprise for Uddalaka to see all these great men coming in a mass to his cottage. They were not ordinary persons. So, he thought within himself, "Why are all these people coming? There must be some great point about it. Evidently they want to put some difficult question to me in regard to the highest Reality. Because they themselves are great men, and when they are all coming together to me, it definitely implies that they want to discuss with me the nature of the ultimate Reality, and I may not be able to answer their questions. Why should I risk my presence in the midst of these great men? So, when they come I shall direct them to somebody else, who, perhaps, will be in a position to answer all the questions." Thus he surmised within his mind that there must be some difficulty, and that he might not be able to swallow any poor show put before them if he attempted to answer their questions. So even before they arrived, he had been thinking like this. "They will certainly put questions to me. They are great learned people and renowned for their large sacrifices. I cannot say that I know everything. There are many things which I myself cannot understand. So, why should I put myself in this predicament of answering questions which I may not be able to understand? I shall direct them to another."

The king of that country was a very great soul. He was known as Ashvapati. He was a highly spiritual adept, a great meditator on the Principle called the Vaishvanara. His kingdom was well-administered. He was an ideal ruler. He was very much revered like a parent in the whole kingdom. There was every virtue embodied in his personality. Uddalaka Aruni said: "O great men! I know why you have come. I am also in the same boat as you are. I have also doubts of my own. I do also meditate as you are all doing, and I have also some difficulties in spite of the fact I have been meditating for years together. Why not we all go together to the great emperor Ashvapati who is a master-meditator and a great adept in that supreme technique of meditation called Vaishvanara-Vidya?" They all, including Uddalaka, went to the king's palace and presented themselves before him.

When Brahmanas go to a king, naturally they go for some wealth. That is the usual tradition. The king thought that these people had come expecting some gift. He received them with great respect and honour, made them seated, and, lest they should not accept the gift that he offered to them, he said in his own humble way: "I follow the path of virtue. There is no defect in the administration of my country. I follow the path of simplicity and goodness. And here I am ready to offer you anything that you need by way of gift, if you have come for that." He received each person separately with due honour. He garlanded them, gave them water to drink and enquired how they were, etc. He was good enough to give them a proper lodging in the palace.

The next morning, when he got up and went to his audience, these great men came there, and the first thing that the king spoke was: "There is no thief in my kingdom. There is no miser in my country, no one who is greedy, no one who drinks, no one who does not perform the daily oblations and libations prescribed as duty or sacrifice, no one uneducated or unlearned, and also no one unrestrained in behaviour. And, I am going to perform a sacrifice. I shall offer you as much gift by way of wealth as I shall be offering to the *ritviks,* or the performers of the sacrifice. I hope you will be satisfied." All this the king was saying even before these people said anything, under the impression that they had come for wealth, gold, silver, etc. "So, you stay here in my palace for some time until I prepare myself for the performance of this sacrifice, where I shall engage you also."

These great men said: "Well, you are so kind, but there is a different purpose with which we have come to you. We have not come for money; we have not come for wealth. Whatever be the purpose for which a person has come, that he must express. That is his duty. He should not speak something else, nor should he be eager to receive things quite different from that for which he has come. So, our purpose is something else, quite different from what you are speaking of or thinking in your mind." "What is that?" The king was surprised. "What is it that these people are asking," pondered the king.

"We have heard that you are in possession of a great knowledge, the knowledge of the Supreme Being, about which we have great doubts and concerning which we have

not come to any conclusion among ourselves. We have come as students begging for this knowledge that you possess, the wisdom-meditation on the Vaishvanara-Atman, which we do not know. This is the purpose for which we have come,—not for wealth, not for money, nor for gifts."

Naturally, the king was taken aback that this should be the purpose for which they had come. Anyhow, he seems to have been a very generous-hearted person. He said: "You may come tomorrow morning and see me."

The seekers were very great people, perhaps elder in age to the king himself, not ordinary persons, but they humbled themselves before this mighty knowledge which the king possessed; and approached the king with offerings of *samit* (sacred firewood) according to ancient tradition, the offering with which students used to approach the preceptor. They did not regard themselves as Brahmanas or *panditas* superior to the Kshatriyas. They went as students of higher knowledge to the great master that the king was.

Now, the king made a special exception to the rule in the case of these great people. Generally, knowledge is not imparted like that, so suddenly. It is not that someone comes today and receives initiation tomorrow. There is a great tradition of discipline. Sometimes it is imposed upon the students for years together. But, here, an exception to the rule was made by the king in the light of the fact that these students were not ordinary men. They were well-prepared already; they were Brahmanas, great meditators, religious people, and entirely devoted to spiritual life. They were not ordinary, raw *brahmacharins* approaching a Guru

for knowledge. So, the king did not impose this discipline of staying with the Guru for a long time, serving him, etc. He simply accepted them as students at once, merely on their declaring themselves as students: "We have come as students." "Well, I accept you as students." Without any kind of formality of discipline and the like, he spoke to them directly.

HEAVEN AS THE HEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

The king questioned them one by one, "What is it that you are meditating upon already? Why is it that you are in difficulty?" Now, each one was asked this question. The first question to be put was to the first among them. "Aupamanyava, which Atman are you meditating upon? You are certainly meditating on the Atman. It is a great surprise. How is it that everyone is meditating on the Atman and, yet, one differs from the other in the technique? What is the sort of Atman, or the kind of Atman that you are thinking of in your mind?" "I meditate on Heaven as the Supreme Being, Your Highness. That is the symbol I take for fixing my attention of consciousness. I consider the highest region of Heaven as the final symbol for my meditation. I regard it as the Absolute. I do not think anything else in my mind. I exclusively devote my attention to it, because I regard it as the All. Therefore, I consider it as the Atman. So, this is how I meditate. But I have no peace of mind. There is something wrong with this technique, and for that purpose I have come to you."

The king replied: "You are a very honest student of meditation, no doubt, and you have been reverentially

pursuing this technique of meditation. Heaven is, of course, a part of the great Vaishvanara, the Universal Being, which you are meditating upon. Inasmuch as what you are meditating upon is part of the Supreme Reality, great benefits are being showered upon you as a result of this meditation. You have abundance of wealth in your house. You perform large sacrifices without end, and you have no difficulty in receiving guests and feeding them, etc. You press the *soma* juice in your house daily, which means to say, you perform *yajna*, sacrifice every day. This is the result of your meditation. You have plenty of food in your house; there is no lack of it. You see everything delightful everywhere. You are a happy person. Whoever else also meditates like this, as you are doing, will receive the same benefits. He will be well-renowned, he will have plenty of every kind, he will be a very happy and amiable person, and he will be friendly with all people. There will be nothing lacking in his house. He will be spiritually resplendent. This is what will happen to any person who meditates like this, as you are doing, on the Vaishvanara-Atman. And this is your case also. But, there is a great mistake in your meditation. This is only a part of the whole Reality. This is the head, as it were, of Reality, the topmost region of the Vaishvanara, the crown, the head of the Universal Being, as it were, and it is this on which you are meditating. Inasmuch as you have mistaken a part for the whole, you have considered the head for the whole body, because you have made this mistake in your meditation, your head would have fallen, one day or the other; some great calamity would have befallen you if you had not come to

me now, at the proper time, for rectification.” It is like a good doctor saying, “It is a good thing that you have come to me. This is a very advanced case.” Likewise, the king said, “It is a good thing you came to me at the proper time; otherwise some catastrophe would have come upon you due to this error in your meditation. You have mistaken the head for the whole body. Well, let it be. Now, be quiet.”

THE SUN AS THE EYE OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Now, the king puts another question to the other sage: “Satyayajna Paulushi, what is the Atman that you are meditating upon?” “I meditate on the Sun, Your Highness, the most brilliant object conceivable. It is the Supreme Being for me. I regard the Sun, *surya*, as the symbol of the Absolute. That is the Atman on which I am meditating.” The king said: “Satyayajna, you meditate on the Sun as the Supreme Atman. Well, this is a part of the Vaishvanara’s Body. Because it is a part of this Great Being, and you meditate upon it as if it is the all, you have in your own life certain characteristics of the Sun. There is brilliance in your outlook; there is plenty in your family; and there is a sort of completeness in your life, as the Sun himself is a complete being in himself. There is material glory in your house, and your mind is satisfied. You have a very happy mind; and you have many other things in your family,—gold, silver, servants, rich food, and such other things. All this is the result of your meditation on the repository of the immensity of wealth which is the Sun himself. And, whoever meditates as you are meditating, also will enjoy the same fruits of immensity and magnificence in his life. He

will have plenty of food to eat, and plenty of everything. He will be resplendent with the knowledge accruing from this meditation which is *brahmavarchas*; yes, whoever meditates thus. But the mistake that you are making in your meditation is that the Sun is the eye, as it were, of the cosmic body of Vaishvanara. It is not the whole of Reality. If you had not come to me, you would have become blind due to this error in your meditation, mistaking the eye of the *Virat* for the whole of *Virat*."

AIR AS THE BREATH OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Now, the king asks the third person the same question: "Indradyumna Bhallaveya, What is it that you are meditating upon? What is your Atman, regarding which you have difficulties?" "I meditate upon the Cosmic Air that blows, as the all-pervading Reality, Your Highness." The king said: "Well, so far, so good. As this, the Supreme Being, Vaishvanara, is all-pervading, so is this Air also all-pervading. You have taken this all-pervading Air which moves everywhere as the symbol of Reality. Very good. Due to this meditation on the widespread Air, *vayu,* which is moving everywhere, in every direction, coming from every side, as the Ultimate Being, tributes and offerings come to you from every side. Respect and honour come to you unasked. Your glory is moving everywhere, as the Air is moving everywhere. Plenty of vehicles you have, lines of chariots follow you. And you are also plentiful in every respect, in food, wealth, etc. So is the glory of everyone who meditates like this." He repeats the glories of such meditation in the same way as he mentioned to the other

persons. “This is a wonderful meditation, but there is a defect in this meditation. Air is only the vital breath, as it were, of the Vaishvanara-Atman. You have mistaken it for the whole. You would have had great trouble if you had not come to me. Your vital air would have left you if you had not come to me as you have rightly done.”

Space as the Body of the Universal Self

Jana Sarkarakshya, the other great man was questioned: “What is the Atman you are meditating upon?” “I meditate on the all-pervading Space, Your Highness.” This is also a symbol for meditation. Space is all-pervading. When one cannot think of anything that is all-pervading, what else can one think except Space? Space is a good symbol for meditation, indeed. The king said: “Space is extensive in every respect. You meditate upon it as the ultimate Reality, and so you have extensiveness of everything as a consequence of this meditation. You have plenty of everything in your house,—wealth and dear ones. You are glory-incarnate at home and in your community. Everything blessed is with you due to this meditation on extensiveness. So is the glory of anyone who thus meditates. But, this is not the correct meditation; there is an error in this meditation also, because the Space that you are thinking of as the Cosmic Reality, is really the body, as it were, and not the whole, of Vaishvanara. If you had not come to me, what would have happened to you? Some catastrophe, like paralysis of the trunk, or something of that kind, would have befallen you. Your meditation would have failed you completely.” All these meditations are wonderful

things, but they are also dangerous things. This follows from what the king is telling to these great men.

WATER AS THE LOWER BELLY OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Budila Asvatarasvi, the other hero, was questioned: "What is it that you are meditating upon?" "I meditate on Water, Your Highness." There are people who meditate on the ocean as a symbol of Brahman, just as there are people who contemplate Space as such a symbol. "I contemplate Water as symbolic of Reality (the ocean perhaps), as an endless expanse. This is my Atman." The king said: "This meditation is good so far as it goes, on account of which you are endowed with plenty of every kind. Water is the source of foodstuff and wealth and strength. It is the cause of the abundance of foodstuff especially in your house. And so is the case with anyone who thus meditates. But, this is also a defective form of meditation because it is the lower belly, as it were, of the cosmic Vaishvanara. It is just the watery element of the whole cosmic embodiment. It is one of the constituents of the Universal body; it is not the entire structure in its totality. If you had not come to me, you would have had a physical illness of this part of the body which is abundant with water. Your body would have failed or some such thing would have taken place, and you would have perished as a consequence of this defective meditation."

THE EARTH AS THE FEET OF THE UNIVERSAL SELF

Then the king puts the question to Uddalaka Aruni himself: "What is it that you are meditating upon?" Uddalaka said: "I meditate upon the Earth in its

comprehensiveness as Reality, Your Highness." The king said: "This is all right, and so you have great virtue following from this meditation. You enjoy and see what is dear. As the Earth is the foundation of all things, you are well-founded in life. And so shall be anyone who meditates as you do. But, the Earth is only the footstool of the Vaishvanara-Atman, as it were. The Earth is like the feet of the Universal Self. It is the feet of the Atman because it is the lowest degree among the manifestations of Reality. If you had not come to me, something untoward would have happened to your feet. They would have withered away. Then you would have gone on crutches."

THE SELF AS THE UNIVERSAL WHOLE

This is what the king said in answer to the representations made by all the six great men. "My dear friends," spoke the king: "All of you are very sincere in your meditations, and honest, indeed. Because of your honesty and sincerity and tenacity in meditation, you enjoy plenty of everything in your houses and in your families and within yourselves. But you do not know that you have committed errors in your meditations. Ultimately, some trouble would have come to you as a consequence. It is good that you all came to me. In the beginning, everything looks all right even in an erroneous meditation, but afterwards some difficulty arises which cannot be rectified even by the best of medicines. So, what is it that we have to now? We have understood where we stand. Well, you have all made two mistakes, to put the whole thing precisely. You have considered some parts of the whole as the whole.

You have mistaken the finite for the Infinite. Nothing that you are thinking in your minds can be the hole, because the mind is accustomed to think only finite objects. Whatever be our concept of expanse in regard to the particular object on which you are meditating, it is still finite. This is one error. The other mistake that you are making that you think of the Atman as an object, as if it is outside. You say, it is Space, it is Water, it is the Sun, it is the Earth, and so on. Well, it is all very beautiful. But, it is 'outside you'! How can non-Atman be the Atman?

"And what do you mean by the Atman? How can the Atman be outside you? Your own Self is external to you? What a concept! You have really committed a blunder in conceiving your own Self as a non-Self. The Self cannot be outside itself; it cannot be an object of itself; it cannot think itself; meditate upon itself as another; it cannot be other than itself. The first point, then, is that a finite thing cannot be regarded as the Infinite. The other thing is that an external thing cannot be regarded as the Self. You have committed both these mistakes. You are having the knowledge of this Great Being, little by little, part by part, as in the story of the blind men and the elephant. Each blind man was touching a part of the elephant's body and regarding it as something specific. The man never knew for a moment that he was touching a part of the elephant. Likewise, you are not aware of the fact that what you think as the Absolute is, in fact, relative. What you think as the All, is only a part. Therefore, you are well-to-do people, indeed, on account of the meditations, but there is also the defect that I have pointed out. One can have glory in this

world, have renown, have plenty, and look all right in the eyes of people, even if there is a fundamental defect spiritually. And that cannot be known by mere observation from outside.

"There is no need to pour water and put manure on every leaf of the tree if you want to tend a tree. You have to water the root, that is sufficient. If you want to take care of a huge tree, what do you do? Do you go to the top of the tree and count every leaf and sprinkle manure over it, one by one, water every leaf, every flower, every fruit? No. You concern yourself with the root of the tree, and then you see there is an efflorescence of every part of the tree, automatically. Whatever you have obtained through these discrete forms of meditation, you can obtain at one stroke by a total meditation, which is the meditation on the Vaishvanara-Atman. The root of the Reality is missed by your consciousness. Whoever can conceive in his mind the true Vaishvanara as that which extends from the earth to the heavens, from the heavens to the earth, from the topmost level of manifestation down to the lowest level, missing no link whatsoever, visualises the Whole. If you can see through your mind this extensiveness of manifestation from the highest to the lowest, at once, without missing any part, which means to say, if you can be comprehensive in a universal way in your envisagement of the form of Reality, and if it can be the Atman, the Self at the same time, then what is it that you lack? This is the Vaishvanara-Atman, the All-Self. Whoever can meditate in this manner becomes the Self of every being all at once. One becomes the Self of all the worlds; he becomes the Self of anything that can be

anywhere, and he becomes the possessor of the glory of anything that exists anywhere, in any realm, in any form, under any circumstance. This is the secret I let out to you, if you can contemplate in this manner. This is a herculean feat, because the mind cannot think like this. If you slip from the grasp of your mind when you think like this, you will find that the mind falls back upon its old groove of thinking in terms of particulars and externalisation of objects. Who can contemplate the object as non-externalised? Not any human being. But this is what you are supposed to do. All these parts which you have mentioned are various limbs of the Cosmic Body. You have to bring them together and conceive the Whole, at once, in your consciousness. Do not say, 'This is the sun, this is space, this is water,' and all that. Do not think like this. Let all these be thought together, immediately, in their comprehensiveness, without missing any one whatsoever, by feeling oneness with Earth, Water, Sun, Air, Space, Heaven, and everything."

Now, having described the cosmic aspect of the Vaishvanara-Atman as the Supreme Object of meditation, the Upanishad introduces us to an immediate consequence that follows from such meditation. The meditator cannot stand outside this Great Object of meditation. This is very clear. Because of the comprehensiveness of the Object, the Universality of the Vaishvanara-Atman, the meditator has already undergone a transmutation of personality, entered into the bosom of Reality. And whatever one does, then, becomes an action of the Vaishvanara-Atman. This is a very serious consequence that follows from an intense

meditation in this manner. Whatever I think becomes the Thought of the Vaishvanara-Atman. Whatever I speak becomes an expression of the Vaishvanara-Atman, and whatever I do becomes Its action. And, then, my actions become a Cosmic Sacrifice, just as the gods thought creation a Universal Sacrifice, as we have it in the Purusha-Sukta. One cannot make a distinction between God's thought and a human being's thought when one meditates in this way. What God thinks and man thinks will then be identical. Thus, the daily activity proceeding from the personality of an individual, in the case of a meditator in the manner mentioned, would be a Cosmic Sacrifice. This is called *Prana-agnihotra*, the sacred oblation at the Universal Altar of the Fire of the Absolute.

The fact of the organic connection of the individual with the Vaishvanara implies that there are cosmical aspects operating even in the individual, just as everything that is in the ocean is also in the wave, notwithstanding the difference between the crest called the wave and the body which is the ocean. The essential harmony between the individual and the Universal becomes patent when a spiritual investigation is conducted into the essence of the structure of both the individual and the cosmic. So, the meditation by the individual on the cosmic, or the Vaishvanara, means the establishment of an inner coordination and the effectuation of the qualitative non-difference between the meditating principle and the object that is meditated upon. If every function that is going on in the individual is ultimately inseparable from the nature and operation of the Universal, meditation is just the awareness

of this fact. There is nothing more to be done in meditation than to raise the consciousness to the fact of this inseparability between cosmic functions and individual functions. Such simple acts as eating, drinking, breathing and working become universally significant. They are not private deeds or individual affairs as they are taken to be. The Upanishad, here, takes us above the ordinary concept of human action and the nature of the individual and abolishes the absurd notion that we entertain usually, namely, that there are such things as individuals, ultimately. The meditation that is prescribed here is of various kinds. One of the specific methods mentioned is that there should be an invocation of universal significance, even during the performance of individual actions.

The specific action that is taken up for discussion here is, what is called in the language of the sacred lore, *Prana-agnihotra,* or the sacrificial offering to the Universal Fire. The food that we take every day is a holy oblation to the All-pervading Vital Fire. This meditation is *Prana-agnihotra. Agnihotra* is the consecrated offering into the sacred Fire. Ritualistically or exoterically conceived, this means the daily performance of the *yajna*, or sacrifice, by a householder. The Upanishad makes out that this *agnihotra* is perpetually taking place in our own bodies, of which we have to be conscious in our meditation. The external sacrifice ceases to be external any more. Viewing everything from the point of view of the All-inclusive Vaishvanara, the externality of an action ceases forever. *There is no such thing as external action, because everything that we regard as external is internal to the Vaishvanara.* Hence, even the

outward sacrifice, the speech that we utter and the work that we do, etc., outwardly, in the world, cease to be a personal or social affair. They become a spiritual worship, a divine contemplation. The three fires which the householders exoterically worship in their houses are called *garhapatya, anvaharyapachana* and *ahavaniya.* These three sacrifices are internally constituted in the individual, in the act of this meditation. The Upanishad tells us that we have to perform a contemplative sacrifice construing the external ritual as an activity that is going on within ourselves. These fires are within the body of the *Virat,* the Vaishvanara Himself. And, inasmuch as we are inseparable from Vaishvanara, these fires are inside our own Self. So, when we offer food into the mouth, it is not an animal act that we are performing for the satisfaction of the bodily organism, but an ultimate impulse that is arising from the Universal Reality. Hunger is not merely a function of the stomach. It is not the alimentary canal functioning in the body merely. It is something wider than what we are, indicating that we are related to something vaster than what we seem to be from our points of view. In religious language, in scriptural parlance, Vaishvanara is the word used to describe the Ultimate Reality, and also for the fire that digests food. The internal fire that is responsible for the conversion of food into chyle etc., that which is responsible for the absorption of the elements of diet into our system, this inward heat is Vaishvanara. It is not the physical body alone that is working in digestion, because the physical body is visible even in a corpse but there is no such heat there. What has happened to the heat? That heat is not the heat of the

physical fire; it is not the heat of any conglomeration of chemical elements in the body. The Upanishad identifies this heat, which is the living force in us, with the Ultimate Reality, called here Vaishvanara, or the Universal Fire, which consumes everything. The five *pranas* are the external agents of the performance of any action. They are the ambassadors, as it were, of the Ultimate Being. The food that we eat is digested by the action of the *pranas.* We have five *pranas,* and so, when taking food, religious people utter *mantras* saying, "This is to the *prana,* this is to the *apana,*" etc. This is not merely a ritual unconsciously performed as a routine, but a religious worship. It is a meditation, and we are supposed to be conscious of what we are doing when we consume food. The process of *Prana-agnihotra* mentioned here is the act of introducing a universal significance into what are apparently individual functions.

The three fires are inside the Universal Being, Vaishvanara. And, again, to repeat, this threefold fire is in us as inseparable from the Vaishvanara. So, when we take a morsel of food what are we to contemplate?

THE FIVE PRANAS

Prana

The five *pranas* are like the five tongues of a flaming fire. It is one single force that is working as five different vital energies. So, each tongue of the fire, each flame, is satisfied by the offering of a particular oblation, as it is done in the external sacrifice. *Pranaya svaha,* is the invocation, which means to say, "May the *prana* be satisfied." This is to be inwardly recited while eating the first morsel. Here, it is

not merely an utterance that is emphasised, but an inward feeling in the real meditation. As every river is connected to the ocean, every *prana* is connected to the Cosmic Force. Thus, through the *prana*, we touch the cosmic border and invoke the Universal Being. In this meditation there is an attempt at universal satisfaction, and not merely some individual's pleasure, in the acts of eating, drinking, etc. When the *prana* is satisfied, the Upanishad says, due to an inward connection, the eyes are satisfied. We feel happy. When we eat food and have a square meal, we feel a satisfaction opening up from the eyes. When the *prana* is satisfied, the eyes are satisfied. When the eyes are satisfied, the Sun is satisfied, because he is the deity of the eyes. When the Sun is satisfied, the whole atmosphere is satisfied, because he is the presiding deity of the entire atmosphere. If the atmosphere is satisfied, whatever is the support of both the atmosphere and the Sun, is also satisfied, i.e., heaven itself is satisfied, even with the little act of taking food that we perform in a meditative fashion. Then what happens? Then, immediately, there is a reaction produced from the sources which we touch by this act of meditation. The reaction comes in the form of a vibration of happiness, the glow, as it were, from the different quarters of heaven. And, if the quarters of heaven are happy, the winds are happy, the Sun is happy, the whole atmosphere is happy, we are happy, with wealth, lustre, glory, plenty and power, because Vaishvanara is satisfied.

Vyana

So is the case with every other morsel that we eat. The second morsel that we take in should be for the satisfaction of *vyana,* the other aspect of energy: *Vyanaya svaha*, "May *vyana*, the all-pervading force within me be satisfied," *vyana* which is responsible for the movement of the blood-stream in the canals, etc. Thus, should one meditate with the next morsel of food. There are internal connections mentioned here, again, mystically. The ears are satisfied when the *vyana* is satisfied. If the ears are satisfied, everything that is around us in the form of the directions from which sounds come and impinge upon the ears is also satisfied, right up to the moon. Then, as a result, the whole atmosphere and all the directions are satisfied, and then all the causes thereof are also satisfied at once. When the causes are satisfied, the meditator is filled with plenty, prosperity, power and glory, because Vaishvanara is satisfied.

Apana

Then the third morsel should be taken for the satisfaction of the *apana: Apanaya svaha*. When the *apana* is satisfied, speech is satisfied. When speech is satisfied, fire is satisfied, which is the superintending principle over speech. When fire is satisfied, that which is the source of fire, from which fire arises, the very earth is satisfied. If the earth is satisfied, we are also automatically satisfied. The meditator is filled with plenty and glory, because Vaishvanara is satisfied.

Samana

The fourth offering, or the morsel, that we take, should be for the satisfaction of *samana: Samanaya svaha.* When the *samana* is satisfied, the mind is satisfied. The *samana* is the central operating force, and that immediately acts upon the mind. When the mind is satisfied, everything that is connected with the mind, the rain-god and the heavens, are satisfied. When the rain-god is satisfied, the lightnings are also satisfied, higher than the realm of the fall of rain. When the lightnings are satisfied, all things that are the support of all these phenomena are satisfied. Then the meditator is also satisfied and filled with power, plenty and glory, because Vaishvanara is satisfied.

Udana

Then, the fifth offering is for the satisfaction of *udana: Udanaya svaha.* When *udana* is satisfied, the tactile sense is satisfied. Thereby, its deity, Air, is satisfied. When Air is satisfied, its abode, Sky (Space) is satisfied. When this satisfaction is effected, everything in Air and Space also is satisfied. Then the meditator, with plenty of everything, is satisfied, because Vaishvanara is satisfied. Then nothing remains unsatisfied, because everything is comprehended here.

Thus, the Upanishad point of view is that a rightly conducted human activity, such as the one in the form of the intake of food, with a meditation on the universal implication of one's existence, will touch the corners of creation. And, the satisfaction of the individual, the performer of meditation of this kind, the performer of the

Vaishvanara-Agnihotra-Vidya, shall be for the blessedness of all mankind, nay, the whole creation. That is why there is the tradition that the satisfaction that we bring to a person endowed with such knowledge is inclusive of the other lower satisfactions. This is the tradition behind the feeding of learned people, spiritual adepts, etc.; because they are not regarded as human beings in the ordinary sense. They are not consuming food merely for the satisfaction of their bodies. There is a satisfaction implied of other aspects, also, with which they are internally connected due to their knowledge, due to their life, due to their meditation. The man of meditation in this way thinks all things at one stroke of the effort of consciousness. Hence, everything is satisfied by his actions. Thus, there is this technique of *Prana-agnihotra* prescribed in this Upanishad in the case of a person who is a meditator on the Vaishvanara. The *Prana-agnihotra* is a religious performance of the one who practices the Vaishvanara-Vidya, one who meditates on the Cosmic Being.

THE NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE IS STRESSED

There are people who perform sacrifices without this knowledge of the Vaishvanara. There are people who take food without knowing this spiritual implication of *agnihotra*. They are pouring oblations on ashes who perform the *agnihotra* sacrifice without the knowledge of its universal import. Where knowledge is absent, action cannot produce any beneficial result. So, there is no use merely performing *havanas*, *yajnas*, etc. without this vital knowledge. They will not produce the expected result. And

so is the case with any kind of selfish action originating from one's own personality for the satisfaction of oneself alone. This will lead to bondage, because ignorance of one's inward connection with higher sources is a danger to oneself, and they will react upon the individual for this ignorance. This reaction is called *karma*, the reaction of action. What binds us in the form of *apurva*, or *karma*, is the reaction produced by the universal, of which we are ignorant and which we ignore in our daily activities, as if it does not exist at all.

But if one performs any sacrifice, such as the *agnihotra* mentioned, with this knowledge, then, whatever one does is a universal action. It is for the good of everyone. And everyone's action becomes that person's action, just as the movement of any wave anywhere in the ocean is the ocean itself working. It is not somebody else working somewhere, hundreds of miles away. Anyone's action becomes my action; anyone's experience is my experience; and anyone's benefit is my benefit, if I am commensurate in inward being with the being of other people. This is the ultimate consequence of meditation on the Vaishvanara. That person, who thus meditates, ceases to be an individual for all practical purposes. Though he may appear to be an individual for a mere onlooker, inwardly he is not a person. And it is so because his feelings, his thoughts, his volitions, his consciousness,—all these are tuned up to Reality of a transcendental nature, which are merely personal forms from the point of view for an outward look, but a universal inwardness from his own point of view. Therefore, his actions are the actions of everyone. They are universal

performances. Whatever he does is offered to all the worlds, all persons, all beings, simultaneously.

All our sins are burnt and get reduced to ashes in a second, even as a tiny dry twig, or a piece of cotton, gets burnt when it is thrown into a flaming fire, if this meditation is practised. All the sins of the past, of lives and lives, get burnt, even as mountains of straw can be burnt by the striking of a single matchstick. Though it is a mountain, it is after all dry straw. It cannot stand the fire of the powers generated in this manner, because no action is an individual action now. How can there be sin when there is neither virtue nor the other side of it? No merit or demerit accrues from the action of such a person, no consequences follow, no result is evoked by these actions. The result of an action is the reaction set up by the action. And reactions are set up on account of nonconformity with the operation of supernatural laws. But, in this case, here, such nonconformity does not arise. One is always in conformity with the existence of every force in the world. No reactions are set up by any of his performance; and, so, there is no merit or demerit in his case, no sin exists for him, no virtue also exists in the case of this person who is a constant meditator on the Vaishvanara, a performer of *Prana-agnihotra*, in this manner. He may throw a little piece of bread to a dog, and it shall be offered to the Universal Reality at once, when he has this consciousness of the Vaishvanara in him. He may throw a little remnant of his food to an outcaste, and it shall be offered into the Universal Reality forthwith. He may offer anything, even to the lowest of beings, it shall be consumed immediately by

the Universal Reality, because of his identification with the All-Pervading Self, and, consequently, with that being, that person, that dog, that animal, that creature, whatever it is. Whatever he does anywhere is known to the Vaishvanara. Whatever he offers anywhere is offered to the Vaishvanara. He may offer anything to anyone, it will reach the Vaishvanara, because of his Self-identification with That Great Being. In this connection there is this saying, declares the Upanishad: "As hungry children sit round their mother, craving for food, so do all beings eagerly await the performance of the *Prana-agnihotra* by this sage who is universally conscious and exists as All-Being." Everyone loves such a person; every insect, every cat and dog will show regard to such a one. The whole universe will love him, who is tuned up in this manner, in perpetual meditation with the Vaishvanara. And everyone will be happy if he eats food, because his food is the food of all. His satisfaction is the satisfaction of all. And as is the mother to children, so is this person a sustainer of everybody in the world. His very existence is a blessing, his very being is an action, even as it is the case with God Himself.

Thus does this highly mystical discourse make out that the highest meditation is communion with the Vaishvanara. And if this is to be practiced by anyone, there would be nothing impossible for that person. And if this meditation can be practised effectively, there is nothing else for one to do in this world, because here is the final thing that one would be expected to do in life. This is the last *dharma*, or duty, on our part; this is the highest service one can perform. It is, thus, that this *vidya* transcends every

other law, rule, or duty in this world. This is the Vaishvanara-Vidya propounded in the Chhandogya Upanishad.

Conclusion

This is the secret of the knowledge of the Universal Being, designated as Vaishvanara. Its simple form of understanding is a transference of human attributes to the Divine Existence, and vice versa. In this meditation, one contemplates the Cosmos as one's body. Just as, for example, when one contemplates one's individual body, one simultaneously becomes conscious of the right eye, the left eye, the right hand, the left hand, the right leg, the left leg, the head, the heart, the stomach, and all the limbs of the body at one and the same time, and one does not regard the different limbs of the body as distinguished from one another in any manner, all limbs being only apparently different, but really connected to a single personality. So, in this meditation, the consciousness is to be transferred to the Universal Being. Instead of one contemplating oneself as the individual body, one contemplates oneself as the Universal Body. Instead of the right eye, there is the sun. Instead of the left eye, there is the moon. Instead of the feet there is the earth. Instead of the head, there is the heaven, and so on. The limbs of the Cosmic Person are identified with the cosmic elements, and vice versa, so that there is nothing in the Cosmos which does not form an organic part of the body of the *Virat,* or Vaishvanara. When you see the vast world before you, you behold a part of your own body. When you look at the sun, you behold your own eye.

When you look above into the heavens, you are seeing your own head. When you see all people moving about, you behold the various parts of your own personality. The vast wind is your breath. All your actions are cosmic movements. Anything that moves, does so on account of your movement. Your breath is the Cosmic Vital Force. Your intelligence is the Cosmic Intelligence. Your existence is Cosmic Existence. Your happiness is Cosmic Bliss.

Creation does not consist merely of the few parts that are mentioned in the Upanishad, as limbs of the Vaishvanara, by way of illustration. There are many other things which may come to our minds when we contemplate. We can start our meditation with any set of forms that may occur to our minds. We may be sitting in our rooms, and the first things that attract our attention may be the objects spread out in the rooms. When we identify these objects with our body, we will find that there are also objects outside these rooms. And, likewise, we can slowly expand our consciousness to the whole earth, and, then, beyond the earth, to the solar and stellar regions, so that we reach as far as our minds can reach. Whatever our mind can think, becomes an object for the mind; and that object, again, should become a part of the meditator's body, cosmically. And, the moment the object that is conceived by the mind is identified with the Cosmic Body, the object ceases to agitate the mind any more, because that object is not any more outside; it becomes a part of the body of the meditator. When an object becomes a part of our own body, it no more annoys us because it is not an object at all.

It is a subject. The object has become the Cosmic Subject, in the Vaishvanara meditation.

The *vidya* has its origin, actually, in the Rig-Veda, in a famous *sukta*, or hymn, called the Purusha-Sukta. The Purusha-Sukta of the Rig-Veda commences by saying that all the heads, all the eyes, and all the feet that we see in this world are the heads, eyes, and feet of the *Virat-Purusha,* or the Cosmic Being. With one head, the *Virat* nods in silence; with another face He smiles; with a third one He frowns; in one form, He sits; in another form, He moves; in one form, He is near; in another form, He is distant. So, all the forms, whatever they be, and all the movements and actions, processes and relations, become parts of the Cosmic Body, with which the Consciousness should be identified simultaneously. When you think, you think all things at the same time, in all the ten directions, nay, in every way.

The Chhandogya Upanishad concludes this *vidya* by saying that one who meditates in this manner on the Universal Personality of Oneself as the Vaishvanara, becomes the Source of sustenance for all beings. Just as children sit round their mother, hungry, and asking for food, all beings in creation shall sit round this *Person,* craving for his blessings; and just as food consumed by this body sustains all the limbs of the body at once, this *meditator*, if he consumes food, shall immediately communicate his blessings to the whole Cosmos, for his Being is, verily, All-Being.

We may recall to our memory the famous story of Sri Krishna taking a particle of food from the hands of Draupadi, in the Kamyaka forest, when she called to Him

for help, and with this little grain that He partook of, the whole universe was filled, and all people were satisfied, because Krishna stood there tuned up with the Universal *Virat*. So is also the case with any person who is in a position to meditate on the *Virat,* and assumes the position of the *Virat.* The whole Universe shall become friendly with this *Person*; all existence shall ask for sustenance and blessing from this Universal Being. This meditator is no more a human being; he is, veritably, God Himself. The meditator on Vaishvanara is in communion with the universe, with the very Self of all beings, attuned to the Supreme Being.

A question arises here: how could all creation be satisfied if just one person takes food? This is not possible unless there is only one Self everywhere. If my self and your self and the self of different persons and things are different, one from the other, it is not possible that the satisfaction of one self can be the satisfaction of another self. If there can be a single satisfaction for the whole universe, there should be only one Self in the whole universe, not many selves, 'I', 'you', 'he', etc. Is it true, there is only one Self in the whole universe or are there many selves? How are we to understand this doctrine that there is only a single Self, and whoever is attuned to this single Self is the Self of all? So, whatever that person does is the action of everybody. But, how are we to make out this truth that there is only one Self? To elucidate this point the next chapter is taken up which goes further into the subject of the Vaishvanara Himself, and analyses in detail the constituents of the universe and the individual, expatiates the fact

that there cannot be many realities, many subjects, or many selves. There is one Self. Everywhere, wherever you go, whatever you touch is an encounter of yours in respect of a single Reality. Whatever the experience, you are travelling within the body of that single Self. Anything that you do is known to that Self; it has connection with that Self, so that every Self is one's self. Towards this subject the sixth chapter of the Upanishad is carried, and the chapter commences with an anecdote, a story, an occurrence, a description of a conversation between father and son, Uddalaka Aruni and his student, his son, Svetaketu.

Chapter Two

SECTION 1

PRELIMINARY

1. *Aum, svetaketur ha'runeya asa, tam ha pitovaca: svetaketo, vasa brahmacaryam, na vai, saumya, asmat-kulino' nanucya brahma-bandhuriva bhavatiti.*

There was a great sage called Uddalaka, the son of Aruni. He had only one boy, his son by name Svetaketu. For some reason or the other the father was not in a position to school him, teach him personally or give him instruction. The boy was loitering, running about here and there with children of the neighbourhood, and never knew what study was; what learning was; what education was. The father, one day, called the boy and said: "My dear son, in our family nobody is a Brahmin merely by name. He has to be worth his name, which means to say that he has to be filled with the real knowledge of the Brahmin, and we should not call ourselves so, merely by name in the social sense. You are here a relative of a great man; you need to be a great person. You should not just be in a position to say, "I am the friend of so-and-so, I am the son of such-and-such a father." You should also be equal inside. So, you must go to a *gurukula* and study, and then come back." *Aum svetaketur ha'runeya asa, tam ha pitovaca: svetaketo, vasa brahmacaryam:* "Be a student." Here, *brahmacharya* means the role of a student in a *gurukula. Na vai, saumya, asmat-kulino' nanucya brahma-bandhur iva bhavatiti.*

2. *Sa ha dvadasa-varsa upetya caturvimsati varsah sarvan vedan adhitya mahamana anucana-mani*

> *stabdha evaya, tam ha pitovaca, svetaketo, yan nu saumya idam mahamana anucanamani stabdho' si uta tam adesam apraksyah.*

The boy was sent. The boy went to a *gurukula* for study and he underwent the whole course of education. He was twelve years old when he went from the house of the father. When he returned after education he was twenty-four years old. So, he studied for twelve years. He studied all the Vedas, all the Shastras, all the scriptures, and there was practically nothing religious which he had not learnt. Now, this learning had some other effect also, that of swelling up the head of this boy with an immense pride. He began to feel that nobody was equal to him in learning; that he knew all things, was almost omniscient. So, when he came, at the age of twenty-four, to the father at home, he would not speak because of the learning that was in his head. He was very dignified looking and sat without uttering a word even to the father. He started behaving very conceitedly. He did not utter one word because of the so-called depth of his knowledge. The father observed what had happened to his son. He does not speak; he sits arrogantly; he is very proud; he is puffed up with learning and he thinks he knows everything. It is very strange indeed. So, having observed this, the father calls the boy one day and says: "You don't speak, you seem to be very learned and you put up a very arrogant appearance; I can't understand what it means. Have you learnt everything from your Guru, which makes you feel that you know everything and are now so full of pride? Do you know everything, have you studied everything?"

3. *Yenasrutam srutam bhavati, amatam matam, avijnatam vijnatam iti: katham nu, bhagavah, sa adeso bhavatiti.*

"Do you know *That,* by knowing which, everything is known? Do you know *That,* by which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought becomes thought?" *Yenasrutam srutam bhavati, amatam matam, avijnatam vijnatam iti:* "Has your Guru, or the preceptor from whom you have studied the four Vedas, taught you these secrets by which things which are not heard of, are heard, things which cannot be thought of, are thought of, that which cannot be understood, is understood? There is something by knowing which everything can be known. Have you heard of this? Have your teachers imparted this knowledge to you?" Very strange indeed! The boy had never heard of such things—how can an unheard thing, be heard; an unthought thing, be thought; an ununderstood thing, be understood? This is not in the Vedas or the Shastras; nowhere is anything mentioned of it. *Katham nu, bhagavah, sa adeso bhavatiti:* The boy says: "What is this? I do not know. I have never been taught this thing." He is humbled a little bit. So, there is something he does not know. "If you have never heard of a thing, how can you hear of it? If you can never think of a thing, how can you think of it? And if it cannot be understood at all, how can it be understood?" "But there is a way," says the father. "There is a way by which you can execute this feat of knowing everything, even if it cannot be known normally. Supersensory things can be known and everything can be known by the knowledge of a single thing." The father puts this question to the boy, but the boy

knows nothing about this. “How is it possible?” the boy queries the father. “What is the meaning of this question? How is it possible for one to know, in this manner?” “Well; I give you an example of how it is possible.” Without going into the details of the subject, the father gives only an example, an analogy of how such a thing is possible.

4. *Yatha, saumya, ekena mrt-pindena sarvam mrnmayam vijnatam syat vacarambhanam vikaro nama-dheyam, mrttikety eva satyam.*

“If you know what earth is made of, you also know at the same time what anything that is made of earth also is made of, because all the articles that are manufactured out of earth are constituted of earth essentially. So, I give you an example of how many things can be known by the knowledge of one thing. Pot, tumbler, plate, etc., and various articles of this kind manufactured out of clay are clay only, in reality. So, if you know what clay is, you know what a clay tumbler is, a clay plate is, a clay glass is, etc. Do you understand what I say? Yes! Because they are only shapes taken by that substance called clay. And, what you mean by an earthen pot is only a name that you have given to a shape taken by the earth.”

5. *Yatha, saumya, ekena loha-manina sarvam lohamayam vijnatam syat, vacarambhanom vikaro nama-dheyam lohamity eva satyam.*
6. *Yatha, saumya, ekena nakha-nikrntanena sarvam karsnayasam vijnatam syat, vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam krsnayasam ity eva satyam, evam, saumya, sa adeso bhavatiti.*

“So is the case with certain other things. You take a nugget of gold, and you know a nugget of gold can be cast into various shapes of ornaments. It can be a necklace; it can be a ring; it can be anything. Now, if you know what gold is really, what gold is made of essentially, you will also know what a gold necklace is made of, what a gold ring is made of, etc., because the gold ring, gold necklace and the like are gold only in their essence. These are only shapes, forms taken by the essence which is the substance, gold.

“If you take a pair of scissors, for instance, made of iron, you know what it is made of. It is made of iron. Then you would also know what anything else made of iron is. It may be a hammer; it may be a nail; it may be an axe; it does not matter what it is, all these things are the shapes taken by the same iron which is in the pair of scissors.

“Now, this earthen pot is a very strange thing, altogether. The earthen pot is a name that you have given to a shape taken by the earth. There is no such thing as a pot, really speaking. You touch a pot and tell me whether you are touching a pot or are touching clay. What are you touching? You cannot say what you are touching. You will say, ‘Well; it is difficult for me to say if I am touching the pot or have touched the clay.’ You are touching the clay and you say you are touching the pot. The pot is in your head; it is not outside. What is there is really the clay. Your conception, your thought is that the substance is clay only. The interference of space and time in the substance called earth is responsible for this peculiar shape that it has taken. So, the pot made of earth is only a name, a sound merely. You are only uttering some words indicating a shape taken

by the earth which is its substance. So, what do you mean by the shape taken by the earth? What is shape? You cannot understand what shape also is. The shape also is earth itself. You are interfering with the substance called the earth by your notional interpretation of its connection with space and time. So, the earthen pot is nothing but a conceptual interpretation that you are introducing into the substance that is called clay. There is no such thing as pot; it does not exist. Yet, you have coined two words. On one side there is the word called clay, on the other side there is the word called pot. Now, you have got two names indicating one and the same thing. Now, why should you have two names if the substance is only one? *Yatha, saumya, ekena mrt-pindena sarvam mrnmayam vijnatam syat vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam, mrttikety eva satyam:* You are under an illusion of perception. You are confounded in your notion of the substance. There is a mistake that you commit in your interpretation of reality when you say, 'There is a pot.' The pot does not exist; what exists there is only the clay. And what you call the pot is only a concept in your mind. So is the case with everything else in this world," says Uddalaka Aruneya to his son Svetaketu.

The illustrations provided by the sage Uddalaka make out that object forms are inseparable from concepts in the mind. If they had not been organically involved in the mind of the perceiver, they would be objectively existent and could be physically sensed by the organs of perception.

Now, in this analogy of the pot, an effect of a substance, namely, clay—the pot—when properly analysed is known to contain no element apart from the clay in spite of the fact

that people go around saying that there is a pot. It is very strange indeed that there is no pot there and yet we say that there is a pot. Are we under an illusion? Is it true that every human being is equally misconceived in the perception of things? Or do we give names to things for the sake of convenience in social life? Now, mere practical utilitarian convenience cannot be regarded as an objective reality. If we give names to things only to distinguish their form, one from the other, for the purpose of practical life in the world, that would not sanction a philosophical or even a scientific existence to the counterparts of these names. We must accept that we are only giving names for the purpose of our notional convenience in work-a-day life, and that there are no corresponding objects. If this is a fact, diversities cease to be at one stroke. It will imply that all the varieties that you see in this world are mere nomenclature. They are a jumble of ideas expressed in language, the ideas having got concretised into apparent realities, as if they are really there and are trying to pounce upon us like hobgoblins.

The variety of things, the diversity of objects and the multitudinousness that this world is apparently, is not really there. If it is true that a substance, when converted into a shape or a form called the effect, does not introduce into the effect anything new other than what was contained in itself alone; if clay is there in the pot and nothing else is there in the pot, it would be pointless to call that shape as a pot. We have unnecessarily created trouble by calling a particular form of clay by another name. We can call the same mass of clay by a third or a fourth name like tumbler,

plate and so on. So we have created a variety in our minds while variety is not really there.

This is the philosophical conclusion that automatically follows on a careful investigation into the nature of the creation of variety in respect of the effects that are manufactured out of causes while the causes are uniform in their nature, ultimately. This is the outcome of the analysis of what Uddalaka mentioned in very plain, simple language to the boy Svetaketu.

As is the case with clay in its relation to the effects produced out of it, so is the case with everything else in this world out of which effects are produced, whatever the causes may be,—iron, gold, wood or anything for the matter of that. The boy could not understand the significance of this teaching. Well, it is very clear. We do understand what they say, but it is terrifying. It seems to shake the very foundation of our belief in the world, and it appears that we cannot exist at all, if this is the truth. "My Gurus did not appear to have understood all these things. They never taught me these things," says the boy to the father.

7. *Na vai nunam bhagavantas ta etad avedisuh, yadd hy etad avedisyan, katham me navaksyn-iti bhagavans tv eva me tad bravitv iti; tatha, saumya, iti hovaca.*

"If they had known this, why should they have not told this to me? I have never heard these things up to this time. I have studied the four Vedas, I have studied the Shastras, but nothing of this kind was heard from any quarter. What is this? Will you kindly explain, holy father?" He is now also

the Guru of Svetaketu. The father says, “Well, listen. I shall explain to you what all this mystery is about.”

SECTION 2

The Primacy of Being

There was one Being alone in the beginning. It is not true that there is a variety of beings.

1. *Sad eva, saumya, idam agra asid ekam evadvitiyam, tadd haika ahuh, asad evedam agra asid ekam evadvitiyam, tasmad asatah saj jayata.*

“My dear boy, there was only a single Reality existing in the beginning. The so-called variety was not there. It was one; it was without a second. There was nothing outside it; nothing external to it, to compete with it, to equal it or to be different from it. There is no conceivable reality in this world of this nature. Whatever be the stretch of your imagination, you cannot conceive of something outside which nothing is. At least space would be there, time would be there, something would be there. But even space and time are objects, externals, effects that came afterwards in the process of creation. And, therefore, they too are negated in the case of this reality. That alone was. There was absolutely no differentiation whatsoever, originally. There was neither external differentiation nor internal variety. In scriptural language, there was neither *sajatiya bheda,* nor was there *vijatiya bheda,* nor *svagata bheda.*”

These are the stock words in Vedanta philosophy which make out that differences of three kinds are observed in this world, which are not there in Reality. There can be internal variety or difference, like the difference observed among

the branches of a tree. The tree is one but the branches are many. Even so, there is internal differentiation or variety in a single body. The right hand will be different from the left hand, one finger is different from another finger, one part of the body is different from another part of the body. This is *svagata bheda*—difference within one's own self, one's own body. Though the object is single and is a unity in itself, yet there is an internal variety of this nature. There was no such variety in the Absolute Being, originally. There is also another kind of difference that we observe in this world. One human being is different from another human being. Though everyone is a human being, human beings are different from each other. One cow is different from another cow. This is *sajatiya bheda,* or difference in a single species or a category of the same kind. Even that kind of difference was not there. *Vijatiya bheda* is the third kind of difference. A tree is different from a stone, a man is different from an animal. This is the difference of different kinds of species. That also was not there.

So the absolute reality was completely free from all these three possible differences. It was a tremendous unity inconceivable to the human mind.

> 2. *Kutas tu khalu, saumya, evam syat, iti hovaca, katham, asatah saj jayeteti, sat tu eva, saumya, idam agra asid ekam evadvitiyam.*

There are some people who think that, originally, *Non-Being* was,—not *Being,* but *Non-Being.* Non-Being is sometimes regarded as an origin of things under peculiar conditions. How is it possible that Being can come from Non-Being? Has anyone seen such a phenomenon?

Something can produce something; how can nothing produce something? We have never heard of such a possibility. So Uddalaka says: "My dear boy, though it is true that there are people who hold the doctrine that Non-Being was, originally, and Being proceeded out of Non-Being as an effect, this is not a practicability. It is inconceivable. Non-Being cannot be the cause of Being. Nor can we say that Being is the cause of Being. It is a tautology of expression. 'A is the cause of A'—you cannot say that. It is a meaningless way of speaking. If Being is not the cause of Being, then what is the cause of Being? Non-Being? Not possible! Non-Being cannot be the cause of Being. Being also is not the cause of Being. Then what is the cause of Being? No cause. There cannot be a cause for Being. So it must be a causeless Being. If it has a cause, we must explain what that cause could be, and the cause should be either Being or Non-Being. There cannot be a third thing. Being cannot be the cause of Being; Non-Being also cannot be the cause of Being, so there is no cause for Being. It is causeless existence. It is useless and pointless to say that Non-Being can be the origin, in any manner whatsoever, of Being. *Kutas tu khalu, saumya, evam syat, iti hovaca:* How is it possible? It is an aged doctrine, a humorous saying indeed, to hold that something can come out of nothing. *Katham, asatah saj jayeteti:* How can Being come from Non-Being? *Sat tu eva, saumya, idam agra asid:* Now please listen to my conclusion. I hold that Being alone was, and not Non-Being. *Ekam evadvitiyam:* So I repeat what I have told you already. Being alone was. Now, it is non-dual Being. It is not like my 'being' or your 'being' or

‘being’ of this or that. It is not an individual ‘being’. It is not a particularised ‘being’. It is not something connected with any object. It is Being as such, inconceivable, because it is not an object. The mind can think what is outside it. It cannot think anything else. But Being cannot be something outside the mind, because the mind also is rooted in Being. Therefore, it is not a subject for comprehension by the senses or conception by the mind. It is not an object of any kind, either physical or conceptual; that means to say, it cannot be investigated scientifically nor argued about philosophically. What sort of thing is it, then? Well, if it could be understood so easily, then you would be blessed. But it cannot be understood like that, because, who can understand That which is the preconception of even the very act of understanding itself. Even the mind cannot move unless Being is there at its background. So it is a presupposition of even the faculties of understanding and thinking. Thus, there is no such thing as understanding it, thinking it, sensing it, conceiving it, describing it, explaining it or arguing about it.”

Now *This* is, to put it plainly, the origin of everything. The commentators on this Upanishad go into vast details of the method of the effect coming from the cause and how creation was originally effected by this Supreme Being. According to the various schools of thought to which people belong or commentators belong, there are various types of *vadas* or philosophical arguments explaining the relationship between the cause and the effect. The crux of philosophical argument is the cause and effect relationship. It is the difference in the conception of cause and effect

relationship that makes the difference in the schools of philosophy. How the cause is related to the effect, and vice versa, is very difficult to understand. Has the effect come from the cause, is it something different from the cause, or is it not different from the cause? You cannot easily answer these questions, because if the effect is different from the cause, it is not an effect of that cause. You have already assumed that it is different. Then why do you say that it is an effect of that cause? Naturally it is the same as the cause. So either way you are caught. You cannot say that it is different from the cause; you cannot say that it is the same as the cause. If there is no distinction between the cause and the effect, why should there be two languages or two words used for designating these two items? Where are the two items at all? Or if there is a continuity, a process as people make out sometimes, connecting the cause with the effect, we have to explain what this process is. The process must be either a movement of the cause into its own self or it must be the movement of something else. If it is something else, then again it is not the cause. The same difficulty arises. If it is the same as the cause, there is no such thing as the effect. So you are caught up in a great quandary. You have to say that there is no such thing as an effect. But if there is no such thing as an effect, how comes the creation? If creation has to be explained, the nature of an effect has to be explained; but you cannot understand what an effect is. And therefore you cannot understand what creation is.

This is the extent to which philosophy can go when it stretches its arguments to the logical limits. But philosophers do not argue merely to get defeated. The

purpose is to find a solution. It may be that you face a wall in front of you whenever you argue into the depths of an object. But a solution has to be found for the appearance of this enigma of creation, or in principle the appearance of an effect from a cause. Solutions cannot be found easily, and inasmuch as intellectually or logically a satisfactory explanation cannot be found for explaining the relationship between the cause and the effect, there are thinkers who hold that the doctrine of creation is not an explanation or a narration of a historical event that took place sometime. It is not that somebody did something once upon a time and something happened and we are talking of it today. Creation does not mean that. Especially, people like Sankara hold this view that creation is a necessary assumption on the part of the individual for the purpose of the ascent of the individual to the Absolute. It may be there or it may not be there; that is not the point. But it has to be accepted as being there. As we have observed some time back, certain assumptions are not objectively existent like an 'x' in an equation. It does not really exist; it has no meaning. Yet it has a tremendous meaning, you know very well, as it solves the problem. When it solves the problem, it extinguishes itself automatically. It itself is not there. So there can be a so-called non-existent thing assumed to be really there and capable of solving a very serious problem, and having solved the problem, itself getting withdrawn automatically.

The purpose of teaching of the Upanishad is something quite different from giving a story or telling you a tale of what happened once upon a time. This is a very important

point emphasised again and again by Sankaracharya in his commentary. That is, we are not understanding the implication behind the teachings of the Upanishad. They are not grandmothers telling us stories. You can understand very well that a phenomenon cannot be explained unless certain assumptions are already made, which are acceptable to the present condition of the human mind. There is no use arguing about whether creation exists or not. It is taken for granted that it exists, because we see the world. No one doubts the existence of the world. So you have to take a stand which is acceptable from the point of view of the immediate reality for seeing. And Uddalaka followed this technique of teaching like a good psychologist. The question is not whether creation exists or not, or how it came. That is not the argument, because there is no use speaking about a concept in the mind which cannot be practically demonstrated from the point of view of the present degree of reality which the student holds. It is taken for granted that the effect is the worldly creation that took place. I shall take you to a further point later on, from this assumption, further to something quite different from what you expected. From the acceptance of the fact that creation is, it is there of course, the mind is taken gradually to the point where it understands that there is no such thing as creation. But it cannot be accepted in the beginning itself. It has to be concluded later on by a gradual ascent of thought through a calculation of logic, step by step, without missing a single link in a chain of arguments, and this chain of argument is followed up in a very interesting manner by Uddalaka.

There was creation. Let us take it for granted. Therefore, there must be a Creator. How can there be creation without a Creator? The Creator was the Absolute Being. This is what I posit as the Ultimate Reality. And what would be the process of creation and the cause for creation? The intention of the Creator is the cause of creation. The will of the artist is the cause of the manufacture of the effect or the product in the form of sculpture, architectural piece, painting, etc. The intention, the will, the original meditation or *tapas,* as sometimes it is called, of the Supreme Being is the cause of creation. It willed.

3. *Tad aiksata, bahu syam prajayeyeti, tat tejo srjata: tat tejo aiksata, bahu syam prajayeyeti, tad aposrjata, tasmad yatra kva ca socati svedate va purusah tejasa eva tad adhy apo jayante.*

"May I see the drama of my own manifestation." This is the Will, and it alienated itself into an effect, like the pot being created out of clay. So, an interesting assumption is already made that the effect is not really substantially different from the cause. Just as pot is not different from clay essentially, the effect in the form of this creation and every stage in the process of creation is not different in essence from the cause which is pure Being. And according to the doctrine of this particular teaching in the Chhandogya Upanishad, the original creation, the first creation, was of *agni* (fire)—*tat teja aiksata*—and at every stage of the argument Uddalaka refers to this effect as God or deity, *devata.* They are not material objects. The fire or the water or the earth that we will be speaking of are not

material things. *Devata* is the word used to designate these items. They are, in essence, identical with the Supreme Being Himself. So how can you not identify their importance with the importance of the Supreme Being Himself? *Teja aiksata:* There is a chain action taking place in creation. The Supreme Being, whom you may tentatively call A, willed, “May I become B.” Now, the original will of A charged into the being of B has a tremendous effect upon B. The creative will of A works through B. It again willed, “May I become C.” C willed, “May I become D.” So there is a downward descent into greater and greater forms of particularisation and diversification until the largest considerable diversity in the form of this world is here before us. The Supreme Being or *Sat,* the pure Being willed, “May I be another.” It then became the Fire Principle operating universally everywhere. That, in turn willed, and It became the Water Principle operating everywhere,—*tat teja aiksata, bahu syam prajayeyeti, tad apo’srjata.* The waters congealed into solid objects and became the Earth Principle, not necessarily this little globe of the earth but anything that is of earth anywhere or anything physical in its nature. *Tasmad yatra kva ca socati svedate va purusah tejasa eva tad adhy apo jayante.* “Whenever there is heat felt in the body there is an expression of liquidity like perspiration,” says the Upanishad. Heat in the form of fever or for any other reason whatsoever is seen to produce an effect in the form of water oozing out. The example given here is, that when you are grieved or when you are perspiring, you feel that the heat generated within yourself either due to sorrow or due to fatigue becomes the cause of

the water of perspiration. By this, the connection between fire and water is explained. From water comes earth.

4. *Ta apa aikaanta, bahvyah syama, prajayemahiti, ta annam,, asrjanta, tasmad yatra kva ca varsati, tad eva bhuyistham annam bhavati, adbhya eva tad adhy annadyam jayate.*

Water produced food—*anna*. In the language of the Upanishad, food means matter. Anything physical or material is called food. Ultimately, anything that is external to consciousness is food. An object of thought is food. That is food which comes out of the condensation of the water principle. Now, these elements mentioned here,—fire, water and earth,—are what are usually called the subtle elements. They are the pure principles of creation. Later on they get mixed in certain proportions for the manifestation of grosser elements, namely, the fire and the water and the earth that we see with our eyes. So, what the Upanishad speaks of here as fire, water and earth are not the physical fire, water and earth that we see. They are the super-physical elements called *tanmatras*. These *tanmatras* are mixed or blended in certain proportions. For the purpose of the expression of the physical fire, three elements have to be joined in a certain proportion. This is called *trivritkarana* in Sanskrit. *Trivritkarana* is the threefold mixing of the original principles, *tanmatras*, namely, fire, water and earth, in such a way that a particular element contains half of itself and one-fourth of the other two. So you have got in every element an element of every other element also. Pure elements are never available in this world. They are all a mixture of the original three. This is

called *trivritkarana*—triplication—the mixing of three attributes, three substances, in certain proportions. When there is water in plenty, there is food also in plenty. This is what the Upanishad tells us in this connection. *Tasmad yatra kva ca varsati, tad eva bhuyistham annam, bhavati, abdhya eva tad adhy annadyam jayate:* Everything is produced out of these elements. All the variety in this world, whatever be the number and the quality of the variety in this world, all this is an expression of these three elements, just as we are told that every colour is but a mixture in some proportion by permutation and combination of the three essential colours. There are only three colours, only three substances, ultimately. Everything else is constituted in some way or the other in some proportion of these three elements alone. Every form of creation is a manifestation thereof. What are these creations? Let us see. Apart from the triplicated gross elements, fire, water and earth, which we may call inorganic existence in our language, there are organic bodies also.

SECTION 3

THREEFOLD DEVELOPMENT

1. *Tesam khalv esam bhutanam triny eva bijani bhavanti, andajam, jivajam, udbhijjam iti.*

The organic bodies also have originated on account of the mixture of these three elements only. There are various types of organisms. Those which sprout up from the earth, like the plant, the tree, the vegetables, etc., are called *udbhijja*. That is one kind of organic creation—the vegetable kingdom. There are other beings that come out

bursting through the egg, not like plants coming from the earth, but egg-born beings. This is another type of organic beings; they are called *andaja.* There are others that come out of the womb of the mother; they are called *jivaja* or *jarayuja.* There is a fourth type which is called *svedaja,* coming out of dirt, dust, sweat, etc. All these varieties of organic creation are also made possible on account of the substance of their bodies being provided by these three original elements only. The entry of consciousness in varying proportions and intensity into these bodies is responsible for the variety of these organic bodies. They are different from one another on account of the different intensity of consciousness present there. The lesser the degree of the manifestation of consciousness in a particular body, the less is the capacity of the organism in every respect. The more the intensity, of course, the greater is the capacity.

Now the Upanishad says: The Supreme Being willed through these manifested parts,—"May I reveal Myself in this multiform of creation."

2. *Seyam devataiksata, hantaham imas tisro devata anena jivena tmana nupravisya nama-rupe vyakaravaniti.*

"May I enter into these three elements that I have created—fire, water and earth—and through them, may I become further manifold, by means of the triplication of these."

3. *Tasam trivrtam trivrtam ekaikam karavaniti, seyam devatema tisro devata anenaiva*

jivera'tmanra'nupravisya nama-rupe vyakarot.
Tasam trivrtam trivrtam ekaikam akarot.

Name and form came into existence on account of this action of multiplication brought about by the triplication of the elements by the Will of the Supreme Being. So the whole world is nothing but *nama* and *rupa,* name and form. There is a particular shape and that is called a form and that has got a name also, by which you distinguish it from another. Minus name and minus the particular shape, what is that object? It does not exist. The three dimensions of an object, length, breadth and height, the weight and the features, which are sensible to the perceptive organs, are the constituents of the object, and if these sensations are not there, if the aspects of three dimensions are not there, there will be no objectivity at all. And, therefore, there will be no nomenclature of any kind. So there will be no name and form. Then, what is this world ultimately? It is a formation of a single substance which originally became threefold,—fire, water and earth,—and then divided itself into manifold forms, to which many names have been given. Thus, what is this universe of diversity before us? It is the one Being alone; except *That,* nothing is. It is said, "Being alone was." Now we have to say, "Being alone is." Even after creation, that Being alone is,—not that It was, only once upon a time, in ancient times and not now. Even now when there is the so-called creation or manufacture of the variety, It has not ceased to be. The variety is not really there, as the causative factors of this variety are also constituted of the substance of this Being alone. That which causes the difference of one thing from another is also that Being only, manifested in

some other form. So how can there be difference? If the differentiating factor itself is a part of that which is differentiated, then there is no such thing as differentiation. So we have the world which is only notional, ultimately. It is in the mind. Well, you need not go further into this subject, as to where the mind is situated and whether the object is in your mind or my mind. That is another subject into which we shall enter later on. It is not anybody's mind. It is the consciousness that vibrates in some particular manner and makes it appear that there is something other than itself. The appearance of the multiplicity of the world is something like the circular shape of the fire that you see in the vigorous movement of a firebrand. If you very vehemently circulate or turn round a torch, you will find that there is a circle of fire or light in front of you. There is no circle actually. It is only an optical illusion created before you on account of the intensive velocity of the movement of the torch. So a vibration of consciousness in a particular manner becomes cognisable as an object. The object is not there at all. Therefore, what you call creation is nothing but consciousness appearing in a particular manner due to a certain vibration, a particular density, a movement of it in a particular manner. So Being alone was and Being alone is, even now, in the form of this creation. Again we are brought back to the conclusion that there is no creation, and that it is Being only that *appears* as creation. However, it is not very clear, so the argument goes on further.

4. *Tasam trivrtam trivrtam ekaikam akarot, yatha tu khalu saumya, imas tisro devatas trivrt trivrt ekaika bhavati, tan me vijanihiti.*

"My dear boy," says father to son, "listen to me further."

SECTION 4

Threefold Development (Contd.)

1. *Yadagne rohitam rupam tejasas tadrupam yat cuklam tadapam yat krsnam tadannasya apagad agner agnitvam vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam trini rupanityeva satyam.*
2. *Yad adityasya rohitam rupam tejasas tad rupam yat cuklam tadapam yat krsnam, tadannasya apagad adityasya adityatvam vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam trini rupanityeva satyam.*
3. *Yat candramaso rohitam rupam tejasas tad rupam yat cuklam tadapam yat krsnam tad annasya apagad candrat candratvam vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam trini rupani ityeva satyam.*
4. *Yad vidyuto rohitam rupam tejasas tad rupam, yat cuklam tad apam yat krsnam tad annasya apagad vidyuto vidyuttvam vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam, trini rupanityeva satyam.*

Every object in creation has been reduced to its constituents, and it has been discovered that there is nothing in an object except its constituents. This is a law that can apply to every object, whatever its character be. The difference in the contour or the shape of the object is not very important. What is important is the nature of the substance out of which it is formed. You know very well

that from the point of view of shape, a walking stick is different from a table, but from the point of view of the substance, both of them are made of the same wood. So, the knowledge of the walking stick would imply the knowledge of the table also, irrespective of their differences structurally. In a similar manner, the rule can be applied to everything in the world, and the Upanishad points out to us that all things in the world are permutations and combinations of the original untriplicated elements,—fire, water and earth. The redness in the sun, says the Upanishad, is a vibration that is emitted from the fire that is in the sun. The whiteness that dazzles us is due to the water principle, and the darkness there is due to the earth principle. So is the case with the moon, so is the case with the lightning, and so is the case with every other object.

The colours mentioned here are not the colours as we understand them in our ordinary language. A colour is a capacity which is present in something structurally, which emits certain vibrations causing a perception of a kind of colour in its body. So the colour is only a reaction that is set up in the process of perception. This reaction is caused by the nature of the object that is inherent in the thing, which actuates the perceiving eye to recognise it in the form of the colour that we appreciate. So is the case with the redness and the whiteness or the blackness that the Upanishad speaks of in respect of objects. They are not merely abstract qualities, but are substances in essentiality, and the Upanishad is trying to analyse the substance of an object and is not merely giving information on colour in the way we understand it in the world. The redness in the sun

referred to here is something substantially present in the sun. It is the body or the orb of the sun partially, and if it looks red to us it does not mean that it has a character of redness apart from the substance that it is. It is the substance itself that is presented before our eyes in the form which we interpret as redness. So, the colour of an object is not something different from the object, as it is the way in which the object sets up vibratory reaction in respect of the perceiving apparatus. What the Upanishad points out is that the three colours that we see in objects are really the threefold presence of the elements—fire, water and earth—so that if these elements are to be withdrawn from the object, there will be no object left at all. If you really know the wood that is in a table, there would be no table. And so is the case with any other complex substance which is in turn constituted of particulars, and if every particular element within it is withdrawn, the object is no more there. This is the case with every object in this world. We are under the impression that there are millions of things in this world; many things, uncountable, we think, is the number of the objects of the world. What is the importance of this countlessness? They are all but various dimensions of one single mass of triplicated elements and, because of the difference in the dimensions and the proportion of the mixing of the elements, we mistake one object to be something different from the other. Essentially they are the same. The difference of the object is notional; it is not physical. Physically, substantially, essentially or basically, they are identical. But we are unable to perceive this basic essence on account of our weddedness to the complexity of

perception and our belief in the externality of things. The otherness in the object is the cause of our belief in the diversity of things. We have separated ourselves as perceivers, separating ourselves from the atmosphere of the object.

It is unfortunate that the connectedness of the subject with the object is not perceivable to the eye. There is a very important intrinsic connection between the perceiving individual and the object perceived. It is more than what appears on the surface. The subject plays a very important role in the perception of an object. It is not that something is located outside the earth or far off in space, undetermined by everybody else from its own point of view, under its own setup. Everything is determined by everything else so that there is no such thing as an absolutely independent object, whether it be organic or inorganic. The independence of an object is an illusion. That illusion of the perception of an independence in the object arises on account of a false abstraction of the circumstances of an object from the other factors in which the same object is involved. Whenever we perceive an object, we take into consideration only those aspects of the presentation of the object which the eyes can grasp or which the senses can cognise. There are other factors in the object which the senses cannot contact. It does not mean that our five senses are everything. Suppose we have one thousand senses; we would have seen many other things in the world. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we have only five senses. So we can see only five aspects of an object. But we mistake these five aspects for everything. There are other

rudimentary elements in the location of an object which are unrecognisable by the senses. That which exists between me and you is not an object of perception. Therefore, it is not possible for the senses to report towards the existence of that which is between me and you and, so, because we are wedded to the reports of the senses, we completely ignore the aspect of that which is invisible and intangible. If the relationship of the perceiving subject with the object and vice versa could be recognised and also the relationship of the object with other objects be evaluated properly, then there would be an immediate merger of objects into an ocean of Being and that will be a single eye seeing a single object and not the many eyes or many senses seeing a multitude of things. So this is the philosophical background to which our mind is driven by the analysis of the Upanishad when it says that every object is constituted of three elements—the fire, the water and the earth elements.

5. *Etadd ha sma vai tad vidvamsa ahuh purve mahasala mahasrotriyah na no'dya kascana asrutam, amatam, avijnatam, udaharisytiti hy ebhyo vidamcakruh.*

The great men of the past, the realised souls of ancient times, immediately awoke to the reality of this situation—"Oh, this is the truth. The redness is fire, the whiteness is water and the blackness is the earth element." These are the only three things that exist everywhere. Whenever we see redness anywhere, we see fire there; whenever we see whiteness, we see water there; whenever we see blackness, we see the earth element there. So what do we see anywhere? We see only three things. We do not see any

other thing in the world. Other things do not exist in the world. There are only these three elements,—the fire element, the water element and the earth element. So what is it that the world is made of? It is made up of these three strands of substance which we call fire, water and earth. Again, these three have been already mentioned to be the manifestation of the Supreme Being. They are the threefold ejection of the force of the Absolute. And so, again, we come to a universality of perception. Whenever we see an object, we are seeing a face of the Absolute, one aspect of the manifestation of a single Being. So it is not a multitude that you see, it is a universality that is abstracted by the senses falsely and imagined to be an isolated object, as if it is disconnected from the others. This is what the ancient masters found out and then they said, "Now there is nothing unknown to us. Oh, we have understood the secret! We know everything." So, if one thing is known, everything is known. This is the answer which the master Uddalaka gives to his own question that he put before his son, Svetaketu. "Do you know what that is, by knowing which everything can be known?" "Yes, now I know all these things. The one has become three, the three have become many. So what are these many? They are the one. So, the moment I know the one, I know the three, and I also know many at the same time."

6. *Yad u rohitam ivabhud iti tejasas tad rupam iti tad vidam cakruh, yad u suklam ivabhud ity apam rupam iti taa vidam cakruh yad u krsnam ivabhud ity annasya rupam iti tad vidam cakruh.*

So, they concluded that whenever there is a perception of anything that is red, we should not think that we are seeing any red object, but that we are seeing only the fire principle there; whenever we see anything white, we should not think that we are seeing any independent object, but that we are seeing the water element there; and whenever we see anything dark we should know that we see the earth element predominant in that. So there are no things in this world. There are only these three elements.

7. *Yad avijnatam ivabhud ity etasam eva devatanam samasah, iti tad vidamcakruh, yatha nu khalu, saumya, imas tisro devatah purusam prapya trivrt trivrd ekaika bhavati, tan me vijanihiti.*

Whatever was apparently unknown to us was due to our inability to recognise the presence of these elements in the apparently distinguished objects. The unknownness of an object is due to the incapacity of the mind to probe into the structure of that object. The moment we understand what it is made of, we know the object at once. So, the ultimate analysis is that we must know the basic substance of everything and not be carried away by the formation of that substance into variety. Everything is a complex of this threefold manifestation—fire, water and earth.

"Well, listen now, my dear boy," says the father to the son, "I have explained to you how everything in the world outside is made of these three elements. The whole world of objects outside is constituted of these three elements,—fire, water and earth. Now I am going to tell you something very startling. I am going to show you that your personality itself is also of that nature. You yourself do not exist apart from

these elements. Whatever is in you is the mixture in some form or the other of these three elements."

SECTION 5

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE THREEFOLD NATURE

1. *Annam asitam tredha vidhiyate, tasya yah sthavistho dhatus tat purisam bhavati, yo madhyamas tan mamsam, yo'nisthas tan manah.*

The food that you eat is converted into three forms. What happens to the food that is eaten? There is a gross form of the food, there is a middling form of the food and a subtle form of the food. The food that we eat is not entirely absorbed into the system. Some part of it is thrown out as excreta, as unwanted material which cannot be absorbed into the system. It is refuse that goes out as undesirable to the system; that is the grossest form. So one part of the food goes out; something else only is absorbed. That something else other than that which is thrown out has again two aspects, the very subtle vibratory aspect and the middling form of it. That which is middling is absorbed in the form of flesh in the system. The flesh in the body is due to the entry of the middling quality of the foodstuff that we take. But the highly subtle form, the vibration that is produced by the essential quality of the food, influences the mind itself. So you know your mind, your capacity of thinking, the way of thinking, will be very much influenced by the food that you take, continuously, of course. If you go on eating the same kind of food for years together, that quality of the food will tell upon your psychological pattern. So, the gross thing is thrown out, the middling form is absorbed

into the fleshy part of the body, and the subtlest part goes to the mind. The mind feels happy on account of absorption of some part of the food that we eat. These are the three aspects, the three degrees of the intensity of the food that we see, that become parts of our system in this manner. Likewise, the water that you drink has a gross aspect, a middling aspect and a very subtle aspect. Any liquid that you take also is divided into three parts.

2. *Apah pitas tredha vidhiyante, tasam yah, sthavistho dhatus tan mutram bhavati, yo madhyamas tal lohitam, yo'nisthah sa pranah.*

The gross part of the liquid that we drink, which cannot be absorbed into the system, is thrown out as urine. It cannot be regained by the system. The middling part, more subtle than the gross one that we take in, becomes blood in the body. The liquid part in the body, which is blood, is intensified by the liquid form of the food that we drink. The virility in us, the energy, the vitality, the *prana* in us, is enhanced by the subtlest form of the liquids that we consume. Just as the mind is influenced by the subtle food, the *prana* is influenced by the subtle liquid aspect of the diet. There are certain items of diet in which the fire principle predominates, e.g., *ghee*, oil, etc. What happens to these things when one takes them?

3. *Tejo' sitam tredha vidhiyate, tasya yah sthavistho dhatus tad asthi bhavati, yo madhyamah sa majja, yo'nisthah sa vak.*

The energy also becomes threefold in the system. The grossest form becomes bone. If we take *ghee,* or butter, or oil, in our food, it has something to do with the strength of

the bones. The middling part of it becomes marrow, the substance that is inside the bone. The subtlest form becomes the energy of speaking. Speech gets activated by the fiery element present in the food that we take. So our speech, our *prana,* our mind, are all constituted essentially of these three items of diet that we are consuming, and the more we take them in, the more is the influence they exert upon these three aspects of our personality. So we know where we stand. These three elements—fire, water and earth—have entered our system. They have become our mind, our *prana* and our speech, which process is indicative of the other senses, also. Our senses, our *pranas* and our mind, all these three are tremendously conditioned by the food that we eat.

> 4. *Annamayam hi saumya manah apomayah pranah tejomayi vag iti; bhuya eva ma bhagavan vijnapayatv iti; tatha saumya, iti hovaca.*

"My dear boy, listen to the conclusion of my research. The mind is essentially formed of food, the *prana* is essentially formed of water and speech is essentially formed of fire." The boy says, "It is very difficult for me to understand all these things. Please clarify this a little more. These are unheard of things that you are telling me, that I am made up of the three elements, that I have nothing in me of my own. This is strange indeed. It looks as if I cannot exist at all independently. I am 'somebody else'. Unbelievable! Please explain further." "Yes, I shall tell you, in detail, dear boy. Listen attentively."

SECTION 6

Further Illustrations

1. *Dadhnah saumya mathyamanasa yo'nima sa urdhvah samudishati, tat sarpir-bhavati.*
2. *Evam-eva khalu, saumya annasyasyamanasya yo'nima sa urdhvah samudishati tan-mano bhavati.*

"You know, curd (yogurt), when churned, exudes butter. Butter rises up on churning the curd. It comes up as the essential part of the milk through the process of curdling and churning. This is what happens to the food that we take. It is churned inside by the forces of our body, and the essential part of the food rises up into the structure of the psychological organ. It becomes the essence of our thinking process. It becomes the mind. As butter comes out of milk through curdling and churning, even so, the mind starts functioning by means of the churning of the food through the action of the forces of the body. This is the case with everything else also,—the water that we drink, and the other fiery elements that we consume.

3. *Apam, saumya, piyamananam yo'nima sa urdhvah samudishati sa prano bhavati.*
4. *Tejasah saumya asymanasya yo'nima, sa urdhvah samudishati sa vag-bhavati.*

In the same way as the mind is formed of the essential subtle parts of gross food, so is *prana* formed of water and speech formed of the fiery elements in the food. "So, my dear boy, have I concluded my findings."

5. *Annamayam hi saumya, manah, apomayah pranah tejomayi vagiti: bhuya eva ma, bhagavan, vijnapayatv-iti; tatha, saumya, iti hovaca.*

"Now do you understand that the mind is formed of food, *prana* is made of water, and speech is made of fire?" "Still more do I require clarification. This much is not enough. Tell me something more about this secret." "Yes; I shall now declare the secret behind all this, how food influences the mind, and how the mind is entirely dependent upon food."

SECTION 7

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL NEEDS

1. *Shodasa-kalah saumya purusah pancadaoahani masih kamam apah piba, apomayah prano na pibato vicchetsyata iti.*

"There are sixteen digits of the mind, of our whole personality. Our being is sixteenfold. I shall perform an experiment with you to prove how the mind cannot exist without food. Do not eat for fifteen days. Do not take any solid diet during these days. You may drink water, however. Why? Because, of the fact that the *pranas* are constituted of water. Thus, if you drink water, the *pranas* will not be cut off from the body. If you do not drink even water, you will not be there to undergo the experiment; the *pranas* would leave the body. So I tell you, drink water as much as you want, but do not eat food for fifteen days. You know very well, I told you just now, that the *prana* is formed of the water element. Hence, a person who drinks water cannot die so easily."

2. *Sa ha pancadacahani na'sa atha hainam upasasada, kim bravimi bho iti, roah, saumya yajumsi samaniti; sa hovaca, na vai ma pratibhanti bho iti.*

The boy did not eat for fifteen days, as advised. He fasted completely, but drank water to his heart's content. Then he came to the father, after having fasted for fifteen days. "Now what shall I tell you, father? I have come to you after fifteen days of fasting. I have not eaten anything." "Oh! Chant the Veda," the father said. "Chant the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samavada." "I cannot remember anything," said the boy. "I cannot remember even one verse of the Rigveda, or the Yajurveda, or the Samaveda. Memory has gone. The mind is not functioning."

3. *Tam hovaca, yatha saumya mahato'bhyahitasyaiko' ngarah khadyota-mantrah parisishtah syat, tena tato' pi na bahu dahet, evam saumya, te sodasanam kalanam eka kala'tisista syat tayaitarhi vedan nahubhavasi, asana atha me vijnasyasiti.*

"Now, do you know what has happened to you, my dear boy? Do you know why you cannot remember the Vedas, though you are a learned person? You are a master of the Vedas, and you say you cannot remember one verse. What has happened to you? You have not eaten food. That is all. This is the simple reason. How is it that your memory has gone merely because you have not eaten? Take the example of fire. Suppose there is a huge conflagration of fire which is burning strongly and it has now subsided and you have removed all the firewood, or the faggots. The fuel has been withdrawn and the fire is subsiding gradually. There is only one small spark left. What can that spark do? It cannot

burn things. The conflagration can burn anything which is thrown into it, but the spark cannot so burn. Now, the fire is there, but it is so little quantitatively and so feeble in its action that it cannot do the work of fire though it is qualitatively fire alone. This is what happened to you. Fifteen parts of your mind have been withdrawn. You are sixteenfold, as I told you. For fifteen days you have not eaten. So, only one part of your mind is now active. Of the sixteen parts, one part is there. Perhaps if you had not eaten for sixteen days, something worse would have happened. For fifteen days you have not eaten, and so fifteen parts of the mind have been withdrawn, even as fuel is withdrawn from a fire. The mind is there only in name. You are able to think, but not effectively, and not to any purpose, just as the fire is there as a spark but it cannot do the work of fire. This is what happened to you by not eating food. Therefore, you cannot chant the Veda. The mind is not working; how can you remember anything? The Vedas have gone from your mind. Now, my dear boy, go and eat. Then you will understand something more about this secret." The boy then went and had a meal. He ate well, indeed, because he had not eaten for fifteen days. After eating a square meal, and having rested, he comes back to the father. The boy is happy.

4. *Sa hasa, atha hainam upasasada, tam ha yat kim ca papraccha sarvam ha pratipede.*

He was very happy; having eaten food, the mind was alert at once, and he remembered all the Vedas, and everything came to his memory. Whatever question was put, he could answer immediately because of the strength

which the mind had received through the food that he had taken. Otherwise, he was in a dying condition.

5. *Tam hovaca yatha saumya mahatobhyahitasyaikam angaram khadyota-matram parisishtam tam trnair upasamadhaya prajvalayet tena tato'ni bahu dahet.*

"Now, my dear boy, I will give you another example. Suppose there is only a spark of fire. Now, bring a small, thin blade of grass, put it over that spark and see how it flames and burns. Bring another piece of grass, and then ten pieces of grass, and add a little more fuel. Then, slowly, the fire burns again. So that little spark of mind that could not remember anything, which was mind only in name, now, once again, has become a really strong mind with attention and memory because of the strength it has received from the food that you have absorbed into your system. The fifteen digits that had been withdrawn have now been given back."

6. *Evam, saumya, te shodasanam kalanam eka kalatisish-tabhut sa annenopasamahita prajvalit taya etarhi vedan anubhavasi, anna-mayam hi, saumya, manah apomayah pranah tejomayi vag iti taddhosya vijajnav iti.*

"The mind is the essence of food, *prana* of water, and speech of heat. You are made up of these elements only. Your mind has been inflamed into action by the food that you have taken. Now you know very well what is the connection between food and the mind. You have demonstrated it in action. Your mind would have perished if you had not eaten at all." "My dear father, please tell me something more. This is very interesting."

SECTION 8

CONCERNING SLEEP, HUNGER, THIRST AND DYING

1. *Uddalako harunih svetaketum putram uvaca, svapnantam me, saumya, vijanihiti, yatraitat purushah svapiti nama, sata, saumya, tada sampanno bhavati svam apito bhavati, tasmadenam svapitity-acakshate svam he apito bhavati.*

Now, there are greater secrets in a person than the food that is eaten. We are not merely food, or water, or fire. There is something very interesting in us, something which one cannot understand, ordinarily. Every day you go to sleep, you dream, you wake up. Why does this happen? This is something quite different from the subject of food. You have some other element in you more than the food you take. You have some essential root of your personality, which is the deeper side of your nature, whose various functions are waking, dreaming and sleeping. What happens to you when you sleep? Do you know that? You cannot easily say what happens to you in sleep, nor why you sleep. Listen to me now. I shall tell you something about this interesting secret. When a person is in the condition of sleep, in Sanskrit we say, *svapiti,* "He sleeps".

Here is a linguistic interpretation of the word *svapna*, describing what sleep actually means. The etymological meaning of the term *svapiti*,—'one sleeps', is that 'one goes', or 'reaches' *sva*, i.e., the self. One word *sva* connotes one's own being or essential nature. What is made out, thus, is that one gets absorbed into oneself in sleep. You become yourself in sleep; that is why there is no consciousness of

anything external, then. *Sata saumya tada sampanno bhavati:* One gets absorbed into the true being that one is. But, in other conditions, i.e., waking, etc., one gets drawn out of the true being that one is, into its other aspects which are external, such as physical being. In sleep, you get into yourself, you enter yourself, you become yourself, and know nothing but yourself. This is sleep. You have withdrawn yourself from all outside connections and relationships. Now, why does this happen? What makes you go to sleep? Who compels you to enter into the state of sleep?

A theory is promulgated here by means of an analogy, or comparison. Suppose that there is a bird whose legs are tied with a thread to a peg on the earth and that thread is fairly long, and the bird flies. How far can it fly? It can fly only to the extent of the length of the thread with which it is tied with its legs to the peg in the ground. So, it goes here, there, flying in different directions, but it cannot go beyond the limitation of the thread. It goes in search of freedom, but it cannot find it, because its movement is restricted. After moving from place to place in different directions throughout the day, it gets exhausted of this activity and returns to the place where its legs are tied. It is controlled by something of which it may not be even aware. Not knowing this, it searches for freedom outside. This is what your mind does daily. It is tethered to a peg which is the root of your being. But it does not know this fact. So it goes out flying like a bird in all directions in the outward world, seeking happiness and freedom. It does not find any such thing there. It does not get what it longs for. The whole day

it works, from morning till evening, in search of that which it wants. But, it does not find it anywhere. Then it gets tired of all activity, and is withdrawn into that from which it arose, to which it really belongs, of which it is a real expression, and from which it is inseparable.

Then, what happens to you? In the daytime you are, verily, other than what you are. You are then artificial, alienated from your being and, therefore, restless in your mind. Like the bird that jumps from place to place, the mind flits from object to object. It has lost its moorings and it does not know where to stand. But how far can it go on like this? It gets exhausted some time or the other, and returns to the source. The mind withdraws itself every day due to the exhaustion of its activity, which is the consequence of its search vainly for the freedom that it cannot find in the outer world. This example is cited now.

2. *Sa yatha sakunih sutrena prabaddho disam disam patit-vanyatrayatanam-alabdhva bandhanam evopasrayate, evam eva khalu, saumya tan mano disam disam patit-vanyatrayatanam-alabdhva pranam evopasrayate prana bandhanam hi, saumya, mana iti.*

You have no support anywhere in this world, except your own self, as the peg is the resting place of the bird in the illustration. But, this is a point which nobody can remember. You seek support outside, and so go on working hard every day to come in contact with things external, thinking that your support is outside, but it is not there! You can not find a final support anywhere in the world. Everybody is sick of you, in fact, wherever you go. Then

what happens? Your experiment fails and you go back to your home, because nobody really wants you. There is the home which you enter after realising the truth of things. "I have searched and searched with the help of friends and so-called supports. I have found nothing anywhere; I go back to my own home." This is what you do when you retire to sleep, but you do not properly get educated by the phenomenon. You do not know why you are exhausted in life. If you had known the reason for this occurrence, you would have learnt a lesson from this futile experiment of earthly pursuits. The understanding is not there; there is only an exhaustion and a fatigue, the cause of which is never realised. So, every day you make the same mistake and every day you go back home crying in the same way. "This is the sleep that you undergo," says the father to the son. You go to the *being that you are,* instead of searching for support in the non-being that is 'the outside'. *Pranabandhanam hi, saumya, mana iti:* The mind is rooted in true being which is your essential nature, which you enter in sleep. That is sleep,—that is your basic substance.

> *3. Asana-pipase me, saumya, vijanihiti yatraitat puruso asishati nama, apa eva tad asitam nayante: tad yatha gonayo svanayah purushanaya iti, evam tad apa acakshate asanayeti, tatraitacchungam utpatitam, saumya, vija nihi, nedam amulam bhavishyatiti.*

Why are you hungry, and why are you thirsty? This, again, is the action of the three elements in your body. We said there are three primordial features of reality manifest as fire, water and earth. They are functioning in the body in

some way. Because of the action of these three elements in the body, you are hungry and thirsty. What is this hunger, and what is this thirst? "Now, my dear boy, listen to me again. I shall explain what is hunger and what is thirst." You go on pouring food, gross items, articles of diet into your stomach, but, even then, you are hungry after some time. Why? The water element liquefies the physical food, draws the essence of it inward, and exhausts the contents of the food that you have taken. So you feel hungry again, in spite of your having eaten food. The water principle draws the gross food into itself. Food dissolves in the water principle and, then, naturally, the food is exhausted and so you feel the need for it again. This is how there is hunger. In Sanskrit, *asanaya* is 'hunger'. Why do you call hunger as *asanaya?* Because, water carries *(naya)* food *(asa)* and causes hunger *(asanaya).* A person who leads cows is called *gonaya,* one who drives horses is called *asvanaya,* he who is a leader of men is called *purusanaya.* Like that, water is called *asanaya,* because it leads food to its proper place. From the body which is the effect, try to know its source, which is water. There is no effect without a cause.

4. *Tasya kva mulam syad anyatrannat, evam evakhalu saumya annena sungenapo mulam anviccha adbhih saumya sungena tejo mulam anvichha, tejasa saumya sungena san mulam anvichha, san mulah saumya imah sarvah prajah sad-ayatanah, satpratisthah.*
5. *Atha yatraitat purushah pipasati nama teja eva tat pitam nayate, tad-yatha gonayo-asvanayah purushanaya ityevam tat-teja achashta udanyeti*

tatraitad-eva sungam utpatitam saumya vijanihi
nedam amulam bhavishyati iti.

"This absorption of the food into the water element inside your body is an indication that some subtle force is working in you, other than the mere working of the alimentary canal in your physical body. There are subtler forces. So from the effect you go to the cause," says the teacher. "If the food is dissolved by water and drawn further inward by the action of water and due to it you feel hungry, even so you feel thirsty for another reason. The water is absorbed or dried up by the fire principle in your system. The fire draws into itself the water principle and then you begin to feel thirsty. The water principle goes into the fire principle. So, finally what remains is a heat in the system and energy that is generated on account of the food that you eat. So what is the heat? It is the heat of fire,—in other words, the energy that you acquire due to the consumption of food. When food is dissolved by water, and water is absorbed by fire, it is converted into energy in the system. That is why you feel strong when you take food, and that is also the reason why you feel hungry and thirsty later on."

By way of the analysis of the constituents of the individual, it has thus been pointed out by Uddalaka, the sage, that everything in this personality is made up of the essence of the three elements,—fire, water and earth. And what we call hunger is nothing but the dissolution of the physical food by the element of water and the absorption of it into the system. What you call thirst is similarly the absorption of the water element in the system by the fire

principle within us. The effect is consumed by the cause and is absorbed into its own self. This process continues until all effects are absorbed into the final cause of all things, where they abide absolutely and completely.

6. *Tasya kva mulam syad anyatra adbhyah, adbhih, saumya, sungena tejo mulam anviccha, tejasa, saumya sungena sanmulam anviccha san mulah saumya imah sarvah prajah sadayatanah, satpratishtha yatha nu khalu, saumya imas-tisro devatah purusam prapya trivrt-trivrdekaika bhavati, tad-uktam purastad-eva bhavati, asya saumya purusasya prayato vang manasi sampadyate, manah prane pranas-tejasi, tejah parasyam devatayam.*

What is the ultimate cause? The cause ultimate can only be that which is not absorbed into a higher cause. The absorption process ceases when the ultimate cause is reached. The grosser forms get absorbed into the subtler ones, and the subtler ones reach the causal state, the so-called ultimate cause from the empirical point of view. This ultimate cause dissolves in the Absolute. There, everything comes to a cessation. The individuality gets dissolved, as it were. It gets tuned up to the ultimate Reality. So, there is an absorption of the grosser element of the earth into the water element, the water element into the fire element and the fire element into the ultimate Reality which is called *Sat,* pure Being. It is the origin of all things from which the multiplicity appears to proceed through the instrumentality of this triplicated structure of the universe, the constituents of which are fire, water and earth. Everything, ultimately, is rooted in Being. This is what Uddalaka makes out.

San-mulam anviccha: If we find out and discover the cause of everything in pure Being, we will not find the ultimate cause of anything in any other thing, except in that Being, pure and simple, in which the effects are rooted in an undistinguishable manner. *Imah sarvah prajah sadayatanah:* All this variety of creation is rooted in Being which is incapable of further absorption into any higher cause, because nothing can be greater than Being. Everything is an effect of It. Everything is an expression of It, but It Itself is not an expression of anything else. The generality of existence that is behind the particularity of objects is what is called *Sat* or *Satta.* Sometimes, it is known as *Satta samanya,* general Being in all created objects which is their essence. Every particular can be resolved into this causeless cause. Just as the varieties of furniture can be resolved into the cause which is the wood, so is the case with any other manufactured object. There is a tendency of every effect to return into its cause. This is what we call the evolutionary process. It is impossible for the effect to rest in itself, because of the pull exerted by the cause. This pull is invisibly felt and inexorably exercised universally everywhere, in all creation, in respect of every object whatever it may be, organic or inorganic. And so nothing can have any peace in this world. Everything is restless, everything moves, everything is tense and everything has an objective transcending itself. That is why there is such endless activity going on in the world, in every field of life. Everything tries to overcome its own limitations and to entertain higher and higher objectives, until it reaches the pure Being. The very aspiration to become something else,

to transcend one's self, to become better and to move towards something greater, is because of the limitedness, the finitude of things. This itself is a pointer to the existence of a cause beyond themselves. If there is no cause beyond an effect, there would be no motion of the effect towards something else, and there will be no feeling of finitude. There would be no aspiration, no desire whatsoever, and no activity at all.

So, this is the philosophical background to which our mind is driven through the analogical explanations of Sage Uddalaka, when he says that the earth element goes back into the water element, the water element into the fire element, and the fire element into that pure Being, the causeless cause of all things. *Sarvah prajah sadayatanah:* Everything is having Being as its abode and everything is rooted in Being. Everything is established in It, as the branches of a tree are supported by the trunk and are dependent on it. The trunk again is dependent on the root, and the root on the seed which contains all this variety. The magnificent expanse of the tree is hidden in that little insignificant thing which we call the seed. We have already explained how the three elements get mixed up in certain proportions called *trivritkarana* and come to constitute both the objective universe as well as the subjective body of an individual.

Now this subtlety of things, this essence of things, this background of all objects and this invisible Cause that is transcendent and is behind all the variety of particulars, is the Self of all beings. This is the Atman of all things and everything in this world has this as its Self. Everything is

moving towards the Self of itself. Where do we move? We move towards our Self. We do not move towards something else, some other object. So, even the so-called evolution is not a movement towards something else. It is a movement towards the very Self of that which is moving.

The whole difficulty is to locate where that Self is. Is It inside or outside, is It in me or in you, or is It somewhere else? This is a point which will be discussed in the next chapter of this Upanishad. This movement of the world and the tendency of things to move, the whole process of the absorption of the effect into the cause, is ultimately an indication that everything is pulled by the Self towards Itself. The subtlest of all things is the Being, pure and simple, and this Being which we call *Sat* is also the Atman of all things. There is a hint given here as to where the Self is, though it is not pointedly explained as to where It is. You have already been told as to where Being is, and now the Being is identified with the Atman, the Self. So naturally where Being is, there Self also has to be. And we have already said that the *Sat,* the pure Being, is the *Sattasamanya,* and therefore, it must be everywhere. So the Self is everywhere. Now, where is it that you are going when you are pulled by the Self towards Itself? What is it that pulls you, which object? Everything pulls you from every side. So it is not an entry of one thing into another thing, not even of the individual into the cosmic. It is not anything internal in an empirical sense, internal in the sense of something being inside another thing physically. It is a metaphysical internality, a spiritual internality, inconceivable by the mind. It cannot be calculated in a

mathematical way as if something is contained in something else; not at all. It is the Self of all things in a novel manner, impossible to describe in words, and it is this universal Selfhood which is the cause of all things and towards which everything is moving.

7. *Sa ya esho'nima aitad atmyam-idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma: tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya eva ma, bhagavan, vijnapayatv-iti, tatha, saumya, iti hovaca.*

"O Svetaketu, my dear boy! You cannot be separated from That; you cannot stand outside this Being. As everything has come from that, you too have come from That. By the triplicated process of the elements your body has been formed, and everything that you are individually is a shape taken by that Being through the triplication of the three elements. So what you call 'yourself' or 'myself' or anything, refers to the Self and is a shape or form taken by the Being, and these shapes in turn cannot stand outside the Being. That is the Self of all Beings, and therefore, naturally you too are that. You cannot stand outside it, or external to it, or different from it. That is your Self; you yourself are That. O Svetaketu, the great conclusion to which you come by the analysis of the three elements is the existence of pure Being as the background of all that exists." So says Uddalaka.

Bhuya eva ma, bhagavan, vijnapayatv-iti: "This is something very difficult to understand," says Svetaketu. "These are things that I have not heard of from my preceptors earlier, and I require further instruction in greater detail about this Being, regarding which you have

instructed me just now. You have startled me by saying that I am one with Being. It is more difficult to understand when you say that this Being includes other beings also which you call different objects of creation. You have merged me with other objects, and taken me into this Being, as everything is put together in a menstruum, as it were, and melted into a pot where all beings have become one. I require further explanation. How is it that everything becomes one in Being, and what type of Being is this where we all go and become united? What is this process of unification? How do all beings get together and melt, as it were, into this Being when they reach It?" The following sections contain Uddalaka's further explanation.

SECTION 9

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

1. *Yatha, saumya, madhu madhukrto nistishthanti, nanatyayanam vrkshanam rasan samavaharam katam rasam gamaynti.*
2. *Te yatha tatra na vivekam labhante, amushyaham vrkshasya raso'smi, amushyaham vrkshasya rasosmiti, evam eva khalu, saumya, imah sarvah prajah sati sampadya na viduh, sati sampadyamaha iti.*

What happens to all individuals when they reach Being? The explanation is given through an analogy. "You see," says the father to the son, "honeybees go to different flowers, collect the essence of the flowers and convert it into a jelly by certain chemical processes that take place within their own bodies. Thus is formed what is called honey. Now

this thing called honey includes the essences of various flowers, hundreds and hundreds of them from where they have been collected. The honey is an amalgam of all these essences, but in this body of the honey one cannot distinguish the essence of one flower from that of another flower. No particular essence can be cognised in its own individuality in this mass called honey. Everything has become indistinguishable. It is something like what happens to the various essences of the flowers when they become honey. They have become one and they are present in honey, no doubt, but that distinguishability of character is absent. No particular flower can be distinguished there in the body of the honey, and no particular essence will be conscious of its presence there as an individual isolated from others. There would be a total consciousness of the honey, but not the individual consciousness of the particular essence of the flowers of which the honey has been formed. This is the work that the bees have done. They have abolished the distinction of all these flowers and merged them into a single essence. That is called honey. This is what happens to all people when they go to pure Being. They are drawn back to pure Being just as the essences of flowers are drawn into the body of the honey. And when they go there they no more exist,—not that they do not exist. The essences of the flowers do exist in the honey. The only difference is that they will not be aware of such thoughts as, "I am this flower", "I am that flower" and so on. Similarly when all reach the Being, though they do not cease to exist, they do not have such thoughts such as "I am Mr. So- and-so", "I am Mrs. So-and-so", "I am a man",

"I am a woman", "I am a human being", "I am this", "I am that", etc. All distinction vanishes. They will be there as the constitutive essence of the pure substance that Being is, even as honey is, so that there would be no self-consciousness of a particularised nature. This will happen to us when we reach pure Reality, the Absolute Being.

In the case of the entry of the individual into the state of pure Being, there is an important point to note. There can be two types of entries, an unconscious entry and a conscious entry. In deep sleep one does contact the nature of this pure Being. One just stumbles upon it, as it were. One is unconscious of it and does not really get absorbed into it. But one does contact it in some mysterious manner. One's individuality-consciousness is abolished no doubt, but it does not become veritable universal consciousness. It becomes as though unconsciousness. There is something that is common between unconsciousness and absolute Consciousness. The common principle is that in both of these states there is no particularised consciousness. But there is a tremendous difference. A philosopher once humorously remarked that the difference between universal consciousness and deep sleep and similarity between them are like those that exist between God and dog. There is similarity no doubt, and yet all know the difference. Because of the inability to absorb oneself into that Being, one comes back from that state. Even at death one does not get conscious entry into the Being. One is not able to continue in either condition of deep sleep or death for long, on account of the existence of the potentiality in the form of subtle impressions of unfulfilled desires to rise up into

waking consciousness, in this body when one wakes up, or into another body when one is reborn. When one gets up from sleep one is the same person that went into sleep. A wakes up as A, B as B, C as C when they return from deep sleep. A does not become B or C.

3. *Ta iha vyaghro va simho ra vrko va varaho va kito va patango va damso va masako va yad-yad-bhavanti, tadabhavanti.*

If a tiger sleeps, when it gets up it is the same tiger only, not even another tiger in the same species. If a mosquito sleeps, when it gets up it is the same mosquito only. They do not become something else even though in sleep they have no particular consciousness, having merged in the pure Being. Whatever one's nature is, one reverts to that particular form of individuality in spite of the fact that there has been a tentative contact in an unconscious manner with the undistinguished Reality which is pure Being.

This pure Being is the Self of all. One may be conscious or not. That is a different matter. But that is the Being behind all your activities, behind your sleep, behind your birth and death, behind the whole process of universal evolution. It is the Self that is caught into this activity in the form of birth, death, incarnations, etc. This will not cease until everything is ultimately resolved through enquiry and meditation into that Supreme Being, which is called salvation. This is conscious entry into the Being, as against the unconscious entry in deep sleep and death.

4. *Sa ya esho 'nima aitadatmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma, tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya*

eva ma bhagavan, vijnapayatv-iti; tatha saumya, iti hovacha.

"O Svetaketu, you are That," instructs the father, Uddalaka. "Please explain further," says the boy. He is not satisfied. "I shall explain to you further," replies the father.

SECTION 10

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

Illustration of Rivers and the Ocean

1. *Imah, saumya, nadyah purastat pracyah syandante, pascat praticyah tah samudrat samudram evapiyanti, sa samudra eva bhavati, ta yatha yatra na viduh, iyam aham asmi, iyam aham asmiti.*

There are the rivers Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Krishna, Cauvery, etc. They all go to the same ocean and fall into the same body of water. When they enter the ocean they become a mass of water and you no longer can make out which is Ganga, which is Yamuna, or any other. If you take a tumbler of water from the ocean you do not know which river-water you are taking. Why? Because the distinguishability of character in the river has been abolished in the body of the waters of the ocean. No river thinks "I am Ganga", "I am Yamuna", etc., after it has entered the ocean. The bodily distinction of the river is completely transcended, overcome, abolished from the roots. All is now the ocean. This is an analogy to describe what pure Being is, in respect of the various individuals here. These created individuals in bodies are, like rivers, tending towards the ocean of the Absolute. Their reaching

the pure Being, which is the Absolute, is just like the rivers entering the ocean. The rivers become the ocean and they do not know where they are, yet they are there. We cannot say that the rivers are absent in the ocean. They are there. So, it is not a negation of individuality, but a transcendence of individuality. It is not that the rivers are destroyed there, but they are absorbed into a larger Being, into a greater reality of themselves, which is their Self. We may say in a sense, the ocean is the Self of the rivers towards which they go and get absorbed, which they become in the end. So is the case with all of us, all individuals. All beings in creation tend towards the ocean of the ultimate Being. When they go there, they cannot distinguish themselves, for they become one with the Being.

2. *Evam eva khalu, saumya, imah sarvah prajah sata agamya na viduh, sata agacchamaha iti, ta iha vyaghro va simho va, vrko va, varaho va, kito va, patango va, damso va, masako va, yad-yad-bhavanti tad-abhavanti.*
3. *Sa ya esho'anima etad-atmyam-idam sarvam tat satyam sa atma tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo-iti, bhuya eva me bhagavan vijnapayatviti tatha somya iti hovacha.*

When they have gone there and come back, they do not know that they have gone there and have come back from there. They have touched, entered, practically become one with the Being in deep sleep, but they do not know that. Their eyes have been blindfolded, as it were. When they come back, each one says, "I am so-and-so". That is all. They have no other consciousness—*Sata agamya na viduh*

sata agacchamaha iti. Whatever they were, animals or human beings, that they become again. The particular species and the particular body with which they entered into sleep or die, they wake up or are reborn into that very species and body, because of the presence of the subtle body which has not been destroyed through Perfect Knowledge. Therefore, after waking up from deep sleep or after being reborn in another body they are not conscious of having come from the Being.

"Now this is the Reality, this is the Being of all things, and you too are that—*Tat-tvam-asi*, Svetaketu." *"Bhuya eva ma bhagavan vijnapayatviti*—explain further," says the boy. "It does not appear that you have concluded the instructions. There is something more. This is the life of all Beings. That you call the Existence or the Being of things is also the Vitality in all. It is what is called life. We say, there is life in this and there is no life in that. A tree has life, but a stone has no life. What is meant by Life? Is it that Being has not manifested Itself adequately in one thing, and It has manifested Itself in a greater proportion in something else? It seems that there is a greater manifestation of Reality in plants and the vegetable kingdom than in stones and the mineral kingdom, for instance. Kindly explain this so that my doubts may be cleared."

SECTION 11

The Indwelling Spirit (Contd.)

Illustration of a Tree

1. *Asya, saumya mahato vrkshasya yo mule'bhyahanyat, jivan sravet; yo madhye'bhyahanyat, jivan sravet yo'gre 'bhyahanyat, jivan sravet, sa esha jivenatmana'nuprabhutah pepiyamano modamana-stishthati.*

There must have been a huge tree in front of the *kutir* of Uddalaka. So he says, "Look at this big tree in front of our *kutir*." Suppose some one lays an axe on one of its branches, it will immediately demonstrate that it has got life. Juice will flow from that cut part—*jivan sravet.* Because there is life, it will exude the essence from its body. This will happen if it is cut in any other part of its body also. *Madhye'bhyahanyat jivan sravet*—suppose one cuts the trunk, then also we will see the juice coming out. *Agre abhyahanyat jivan sravet*—you may cut a little branch on the top. Then also you will see that there is life in it, as juice will exude from that particular part. *Sa esha jivenatmana'nuprabhutah pepiyamano modamanaas-tishthati.* The exuberant growth of the tree is due to the life that is in the tree. You will find much foliage of trees in certain seasons of the year when the whole vegetable kingdom is highly delighted. What is this delight? What is this happiness that we experience in the blooming of a beautiful tree. It is the manifestation of the life principle in it. It is the working of *jiva,* that essence which you call life.

It cannot be explained in any other way. No one can say what this life is. You can simply say there is life, that is all. But what do you mean by life? Life is life. It cannot be explained by any other word. It has no definition, it has no comparison. Life cannot be compared to anything else, for there is nothing like it. It is unique in its nature. It stands by itself absolutely. We simply say life, as if everything is clear. There is life and we lead a life. But what is life? Nobody knows. Nobody cares to do anything about it, because it is the ultimate Being. It cannot be explained by any other higher reference. So, the existence of the tree, the working of the tree, the living of the tree is due to this vitality which is referable back to pure Being, the *Sat*. This is present not only in the tree but in everything else. If life departs from the tree, the tree dries up. When you say a particular branch of the tree is dry, what you mean is, that life has departed from that particular part.

2. *Asya yad-ekam sakham jivo jahati, atha sa sushyati, dvitiyam jahati, atha sa sushyati, trtiyam jahati, atha sa sushyati, sarvam jahati sarvah sushyati, evam eva khalu saumya, viddhi iti hovacha.*

That particular branch which is divested or deprived of the life principle becomes dry. It is lifeless. Another branch dries up, a third branch dries up, finally the trunk dries up; the whole tree can dry up. If the life principle in the tree leaves the body of the tree, the whole tree dries up. So what is it that is in the tree which you call life? That is the Essence.

3. *Jivapetam vava kiledam mriyate, na jivo mriyata iti, sa ya esho'nima etad-atmyam idam sarvam, tat*

satyam, sa atma, tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya eva ma, bhagavan, vijnapayatviti; tatha, saumya, iti hovacha.

What we call death is the departing of life from a particular body. So death is not the death of the life principle itself. *Na jivo mriyata*—life itself does not die. The vitality is transferred from one location to another. It is withdrawn from a particular formation. That is all. Life which is the manifestation of the general principle, the pure Being, the Reality, is withdrawn from that particular manifestation called the body. Then that particular form is said to die. It is deprived of the essence, the life-force. So is the case with everything including us. Know this. *Evam eva khalu saumya viddhi.*

This is only an example that I have given to you, my dear boy. From this example, this analogy, you must understand everything that follows as an implication. We are all like trees, human bodies endowed with the living principle, and we shall die only when the life principle in us in withdrawn. This Essence that is the Being is the Atman of all things. And everything in this world, everything in this creation has this as the Self. There are not many Selves. Though the bodies are many, forms are many, individuals are many, the Self is only one. So, everything reverts into this Supreme Self from where it has come and towards which it tends some way or other. "That you are, Svetaketu—*Tattvam-asi,* Svetaketu," says the teacher. "Please explain further—*Bhuya eva ma bhagavan vijnapayatv-iti,*" asks the disciple. "*Tatha saumya itihovacha*—well, I shall explain to you further," replies the

teacher. He tells something very interesting about this unmanifested Being from which manifested forms arise.

SECTION 12

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

Illustration of the Banyan Tree and Its Seed

1. *Nyagrodha-phalam ata aharet; idam, bhagavah, iti; bhinddhiti; bhinnam, bhagavah, iti; kim atra pasyasiti; anvya ivema dhanah, bhagavah, iti; asam angaikam bhinddhiti; bhinna, bhagavah, iti; kim atra pasyasiti; na kim-chana, bhagavah, iti.*

There was a banyan tree in front of the *kutir*. All know that the banyan tree is very large but the fruit is so small and the seed is atomic. "Bring one fruit," says the father to the son. The boy runs and brings a small fruit of that huge expanse of the tree called banyan, and says, "*Idam bhagavah*—here is the fruit, my father." "*Bhinddhiti*—split it, break the fruit into pieces," says the father. "*Bhinnam bhagavah*—I have broken it," replies Svetaketu. "*Kim atra pasyasiti*—now what do you see inside it?" asks the father. The boy says, "*Anvya*—I see small granules."

All must have seen the fruit of a banyan tree. How many fruits are there in the tree? How many seeds are there in each fruit? Innumerable, countless, very tiny, atomic seeds are there. How small they are! And you can contrast the smallness of the seeds with the largeness of the tree which is the banyan.

"*Anvya ivema dhanah*—very small seeds I see inside the fruit, very tiny, atomic seeds are there," says the son. "*Asam*

angaikam bhinddhiti—now you split one small seed," says the father.

It is very difficult to split it. You cannot take it by the hand. It will escape your grip. Somehow the boy split that little atomic seed.

"*Bhinna bhagavah iti*—yes, I have split it," he says. "*Kim atra pasyasiti*—now inside that very little atomic seed, what do you see?" the father asks. "*Na kim-chana*—I do not see anything," says the boy.

Our naked eyes cannot see what is inside that little seed. There is a small jelly-like, very tiny, invisible essence inside that seed. It is very small, a semi-liquid-like substance. We may be able to see it with our powerful microscope. There is no solid hard substance there inside that little seed.

"What do you see in it?" asks the father, and the son replies, "I cannot see anything."

2. *Tam hovacha yam vai, saumya, etam animanam na nibhalayase, etasya vai, saumya, esho'nimna evam mahan nyagrodhas-tishthati srddhatsva, saumya iti.*

The father now explains: "Do you know, my dear boy, what is inside the seed? It is a great wonder. You say that you cannot see anything there. It is practically invisible and non-existent, as it were, from your point of view. Thin, apparently non-existent something, the very little, subtle essence there inside that little seed, has become this vast tree in front of you. Do you know this? How is this possible? Is it not a miracle that a terribly large tree grows from this little speck of jelly which cannot even be seen with the eyes? Now look at this miracle. Please have faith in

what I say and go into the deeper profundity of this analogy of mine."

3. *Sa ya esho'nima, aitad atmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma, tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya eva ma, bhagavan, vijnapayatv-iti; tatha, saumya, iti hovacha.*

This little so-called subtle essence is pervading the entire tree. How is it possible? How can an atomic little speck pervade the large expanse of the tree? Yet, there is nothing in this tree which is not in this little speck of jelly. The so-called large tree that you see there is nothing but whatever was contained in the invisible speck inside the seed. So is this vast universe. We say this universe is so large, so big or so unmanageable, so gross, so weighty. This is exactly like saying this tree is so big. But from where has it come? It has come from a very small, atomic, subtle Seed. That is the Being, the essence of the vast tree of this universe. So this Being, the essence of this whole universe, is the Self of the whole universe. This little jelly-like substance inside the little seed is the Self of this whole tree. It is the Atman of this banyan, because that has become all this, and outside it the tree does not exist. So it is the being of this tree. Even so is the Being of the whole universe including one's own self. "*Tat-tvam-asi*—you are that," says the father. We can tell every branch of the tree, "You are that essence," we can tell every leaf in the tree, "You are that essence," every fruit and flower in the tree, "You are that." And you will not be committing a mistake in saying that, because it is true. Even so we can say to every individual, "You are That," because all individuals have come from

that indistinguishable, homogeneous Reality. *"Bhuya eva ma bhagavan vijnapayatv-iti*—please explain further," says the son. Another example is given by the father.

SECTION 13

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

Illustration of Salt and Water

1. *Lavanam etad udake'vadhaya, atha ma pratar-upasidatha iti; sa ha tatha chakara; tam hovacha; yad-dosha lavanam udake'vadhah, anga tad-ahareti, taddhavamrsya na viveda; yatha vilinam evam.*

"Bring a little salt and put it in a cup of water," said Uddalaka. The boy brought a cup of water and put some salt into it. "See me tomorrow morning," says the father. *Sa ha tatha chakara*—the boy does like that. Next morning the boy comes and greets the father and the father says, "Yesterday you put salt into the water; bring that salt." He goes there and sees that the salt is not there in the cup. What has happened to the salt? It has become one with the water. So he could not bring the salt.

2. *Angasyantad-achameti, katham iti, lavanam iti, madhyad-achameti, katham iti, lavanam iti, antad-achameti, katham iti, lavanam iti, abhiprasyaitad-atha mopasidatha iti, taddha tatha chakara tac-chasvat samvartate; tam hovacha: atra vava kila sat, saumya, na nibhalayase, atraiva kila iti.*
3. *Sa ya esho'nimaitad-atmyam-idam sarvam tat-satyam sa atma tat-tvam-asi svetaketo iti, bhuya eva*

ma bhagavan vijnapayitu iti tatha saumya iti hovacha.

The boy says, “There is no salt in the water.” Uddalaka says, “Now I shall prove that there is salt. You sip a little of the water from the top and tell me what the taste is.” “It is saltish,” says the boy. “You sip a little from the middle and tell me its taste.” “It is salty.” “You sip a little from any part of the water and see how it tastes.” “All is salty.” “So, now tell me, does the salt exist there or not?” “Yes, it does exist.” “But you cannot see it, is it not?” “Yes, I cannot see it.”

Now, this is a proof to show that though we cannot see a thing, it can exist. Because the salt is dissolved in water, the former cannot be seen through the eyes, but through some other means, the organ of taste, we can discover that it is there. The generality of the salt, which has become indistinguishable from the body of the water, cannot be visibly seen with the eyes, no doubt, but we can find out that the salt is there by tasting the water. By one means we cannot see it, but by another means we can. Similar is the case with the Being that has entered into the substance of all this creation. In the same way as we cannot see the salt in water but we can verify its existence by some other means, that is, by tasting, we cannot see this Being in the particulars of this world through our organs including the internal organ, as it is dissolved in the particulars, as it were. But, by employing another means, other than the organs and the mind, we can find out that this Being is in every particular. And then we will find that It is everywhere in the universe, just as salt is everywhere in the saline water. Wherever we touch, we touch That only, just as wherever

we touch the water which is saline, we are touching salt only in that water.

"What is this other way? Please instruct me about this," asks the boy. How is it possible for us to get an insight into this Reality present in all particular forms? Neither one's own intellect nor the senses will be of any use here. The senses are used to a kind of contact with externals, and whatever is not an external cannot become an object of their perception. Whatever is outside, that alone the senses can perceive, and this Being we are speaking of is not outside and, therefore, It cannot be an object of the senses. Nor can the mind conceive the Being, because the function of the mind is principally a synthesis of the perceptions of the senses, an organisation of these sensations and perceptions. It introduces a kind of coordination and method into the chaotic mass of perceptions of the senses. The mind does not see something which is not seen by the senses. It is only introducing a logical sequence and coherence into the mass of sensations. We are not in any way better off by employing the mind or the intellect as a means of cognition or perception. What the mind does, what the intellect does, is merely a corroboration and confirmation of what senses tell us. And if the senses are of no use, the mind and intellect also are of no use. The only importance that you can attach to the function of the mind or intellect is that it has a peculiar capacity to reflect an inferential presence of a higher reality, due to the fact that it is less distracted than the senses and that it has an integrating power which is absent in the senses on account of their isolated activities. Now, the mind which is endowed

with this special power which is ordinarily not visible, has to be employed for the purpose of gaining an insight into Reality by means of guidance received from a master.

To this subject Uddalaka, the sage, reverts by means of an illustration. Take for instance, there is a person who has been waylaid by robbers, blindfolded, handcuffed, legs tied together, dragged into a wilderness and thrown into a pit somewhere in an unknown place. He has been taken a long distance away from his house. He does not know where he has been taken, because his eyes have been covered by a patch of cloth. He only knows that he has been removed to a distant place. He is in a state of despair. The only thing that he can do under that condition is to cry for help. His intellect will not help him there, his mind will not help him, his sense of sight has failed. Under such conditions, the only help can be from another who has sight. A person with eyes who can see the way can come, help, and guide him. There is no other way out. Even so, every one of us has lost sight of Reality. Every one of us has been spiritually blindfolded. Everyone is in complete spiritual darkness. And there is sorrow, as a consequence thereof. What is the way out?

SECTION 14

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

The Need for a Guru

1. *Yatha, saumya, purusham gandharebhyo'bhinaddhak-sham aniya tam tato'tijane visrjet, sa yatha tatra prangva udangva*

atharangva pratyangva pradhmayita'bhinaddhaksha anito'bhinaddhaksho virsrshtah.

2. *Tasya yathabhinahanam pramuchya prabruyat, etam disam gandharah, etam disam vrajeti, sa gramad-gramam prcchan pandito medhavi gandharan evopasampadyeta evam evehacharyavan purusho veda, tasya tavadeva chiram yavan na vimokshye, atha sampatsya iti.*

Someone was living in a country called Gandhara, and was attacked by robbers on the way. He was tied up. His eyes were covered and he was taken to a long distance and left in a thick forest infested with tigers, wild beasts, etc. The person was crying, "I have lost my way. I do not know where I am. Will anybody come and help me? Does anybody hear my voice? Is there anyone near me?" That was all he could do. Then, there was one good Samaritan passing by that way and he untied all the knots with which the person was bound. He removed the bandages from the eyes and said to him, "Oh, you have come to this place. Where are you coming from?" The poor man replied, "I come from Gandhara. Now I do not know where it is. Which is the way to that place?" Then the kind one said, "You proceed from this place in that direction and you will see a big tree there. Then you turn to the right and walk for about two miles. Then you will see a village. From there you move towards the east and there you will see a signpost. Now proceed slowly and you can safely reach your place."

This is an analogy to describe the condition of people in this world. We have been exiled from our 'home' and cast into the wilderness by the robbers of the senses and we

cannot see things properly as they really are. We do not know from where we have come. We have lost our way. And the apparatus of our senses are not going to help us. The mind has been confounded. The only way is to ask for help, and just as a person with sight can help a person without sight and can point out the way to the destination which he has to reach, so is the blindfolded soul in this wilderness of life to take the guidance of a person with spiritual eyesight, who can visualise the presence of the great Reality which is the destination of everyone. Such a person with eyes which can see the truth of things as they are is called an *acharya,* a spiritual master. He is the preceptor, he is the Guru. There is no way of escape from this muddle of life except through the guidance of a preceptor, because a preceptor, a Guru, is one who has undergone these experiences of life. He has seen the tortures of existence, the sufferings, the winding path and the dismal ways through which one has to go. He knows from where one has come and how one can revert to that place again. Through the indications given by the master, the disciple has to proceed gradually.

In the analogy, the good Samaritan told the blindfolded man how he could go back to his house step by step by the winding path with the help of various objects which served as signposts. Even so, are the scriptures signposts on the way. The instructions of the Guru are the indications on the path. We are told that from this predicament in which we are now, the next step would be like this. Naturally, we cannot reach our destination at one stroke. It is perhaps several miles away, hundreds of miles far. This means that

we have to put forth much effort. So we go three miles from here and we find a road that diverts itself to the right. We go along that. Then we find a huge banyan tree there. From there, we again turn to our left. Then we go another ten miles along the same path, and find a village there. Then we take rest and from there we move towards the western direction, and so on and so forth. These represent the higher and higher levels of consciousness to which we have to rise up, overcoming the various obstructions on the spiritual path. Thus are we instructed by the master.

We have fallen from the ancient, pristine existence by a tortuous process of descent. It is not a sudden drop, as drops of water from the sky fall on the earth. It is a winding process through various kinds of curves and turns through which Consciousness has got itself entangled and has come to this present pitiable condition of earth-consciousness, body- consciousness, object-consciousness, and a total absence of universal consciousness. To go back to that orginal state, it is not possible to take a jet plane and fly straight. It is not a straight movement. It is also a very winding process. We cannot see beyond a certain distance. This is the difficulty of the path. We cannot have a set of binoculars and see everything direct till the last point is reached. There appears to be a blind alley, as they say, and we cannot see anything further. We will see what is beyond a particular spot only after reaching that spot. Several such spots have to be passed. So it is pointless on the part of any enthusiastic seeker to know the nature of the Absolute at one stroke. In the case of a traveller whose destination is far away, he has to move a certain distance first. He has to

move by various methods. He may go in a car. Sometimes he may fly. Yet at other times he may have to walk. For, everywhere, every kind of vehicle will not be available. Likewise is the method that has to be adopted in the practice of *sadhana*. The same method will not work always. It is not a same, single, stereotyped routine that we practise right from the beginning till the end. After a certain point or a certain limit is reached, the method of *sadhana* may have to be changed, the speed may have to be accelerated and a different type of guidance may have to be required. As is the case with an ordinary journey, as is the case with medical treatment, so is the case with education, whether it be secular or spiritual. There are stages of approach, and you will not be told everything at one stroke. There is also no use explaining that, because the mind cannot grasp all the intricacies at once.

So the point is, that just as the blindfolded man received instructions from the good Samaritan, so the blindfolded soul has to receive guidance from a spiritual master. And as the person in the illustration was intent only on reaching home and was not interested in mere sightseeing, (otherwise he would go hither and thither and miss the way again), so is the soul to be intent upon its destination, and should not waste its time in sightseeing in this world. The master will tell the seeker, "This is the way." On the way he may see many things. He should not be interested in those things. They are experiences through which every one has to pass. When one goes to Delhi, one will see many towns on the way, but one is not interested in those towns. One is interested in Delhi, the destination only. Notwithstanding

the fact that one passes through various towns, cities, villages and halting places, they give no respite because one's mind is not there. So is the case with the ascent of the soul to the Supreme Being. Many experiences have to be passed through by the seeker and he will have many visions, many things which will be more wonderful than the things that he sees in this world. But he has no interest in them, because they are only halting places, passing phenomena. And as was the case with the blindfolded man who was intent only on rushing back home and not seeing places on the way, so should be the interest of a spiritual seeker to return to the 'source', passing through tentative experiences in which he should not get engrossed. He should not get lodged in the halting places on the way. Thus the soul can reach back to its grand goal, its destination.

What is the way? The way is the *acharya*, the Guru, the teacher, the master, the preceptor. There is no other way. "So only a person who has a proper preceptor can realise the Truth," says this Upanishad. No one else can reach this Truth by any effort of the mind, the intellect or the senses. No amount of scientific analysis, no amount of study of the scriptures alone will be of any use. It requires direct guidance from one who has personal experience. Such a person is the *acharya,* the preceptor who knows what Truth is. He is a blessed person who has such a guide with him. Then he will have to live in this world only as long as this body lasts. Afterwards, he will have no bondage. As long as he is tied up to this bodily individuality, as long as the *prarabdha-karma* which he has to experience remains, so long he will have to remain. The *sanchita-karmas* are

destroyed by knowledge. The *agami-karmas* do not exist for that person, but the *prarabdha-karma* continues. The *prarabdha* is a name that we give to those cumulative effects of action which have given rise to this physical body, this individuality of ours, in which we have to pass our life here and undergo experiences of various types. When we are in a position to complete this course of change through this body, then we are about to enter that borderland of freedom. We have to be bound to this world, to this life, only as long as this body is there. The moment this body is cast off we are free, because there is nothing else to bind us. All our *karmas* have been destroyed by meditation and by the actions performed in this life. They are not going to bind us because they are not selfish actions. They are not motivated by bodily individuality. They are propelled by knowledge of a higher truth, and therefore, the actions of the present life after the rise of knowledge, the *agami-karmas*, will not bind us. Nor are we going to be influenced by the *sanchita-karmas,* results of past actions. They too have been burnt up by knowledge. The only thing that remains is *prarabdha.* When that is gone, every type of bondage is gone—*Tavad eva chiram vavanna vimokshye, atha sampatsya iti.* Then we attain to the great Being. This Being is the truth of all things.

3. *Sa ya esho'nima aitad atmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma, tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya eva ma, bhagavan vijnapayatv-iti; tatha, saumya, iti hovacha.*

After the above instructions, Uddalaka says: "O Svetaketu, do you understand what I am telling you? This

great but most subtle essence of all the worlds is the Truth, the Atman, the Supreme Reality within you, and you are That." "Explain to me further, O master," says the boy.

Now, what is the difference between a person who has consciously attained realisation and another who is unconsciously thrown into it as in sleep or death? Why does not one attain realisation after death, if casting off the body is the only criterion of liberation? The Upanishad here tells us that when one casts off the body, one attains liberation. Then why should not everyone attain liberation when they go to deep sleep or die, if the body alone is the bondage? There is a difference between one with knowledge and one in deep sleep without knowledge. Notwithstanding the fact that both these persons cast off their body one day or the other and both have been thrown into Reality, what is the difference? This again is explained by another example. This chapter is full of analogies.

SECTION 15

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

The Order of Merging

1. *Purusam, saumya, utopatapinam jnatayah paryupasate, janasi mam, janasi mam iti; tasya yavan na van manasi sampadyate, manah prane, pranah tejasi, tejah parasyam devatayam tavaj-janati.*

When a person is very sick and is about to depart from this world, people sit around him. His relatives gather around him and ask him, "Do you recognise us?" "Do you

know who I am sitting here?" If the senses are active, naturally, he would recognise them; but if the senses have been withdrawn into the mind, then he can only think but cannot speak. He can only have memory of his relations, but he cannot see them gathered or seated in front of him. What happens at the time of death is that there is a gradual withdrawal of the functions of the various organs in the system. The physical senses are activated by certain forces which impel us towards perception. When the purpose of bodily existence in this world is finished, then there is no work for the senses. When one is alive, the senses act in a particular manner on account of *prarabdha-karma* that they are expected to execute in this span of life. When that is over, this body is of no use for the purpose of experience here. Then the senses understand that they cannot do anything through this body. They want to drop this instrument. So they withdraw themselves. Then the physical body cannot any more become a location of these functions of the senses. What are these senses? They are the energies propelled by the mind. It is the mind itself projecting its tentacles through the orifices of the body called the sense organs and the motor organs. So, when the functions of an individual in a particular body is over by the exhaustion of *prarabdha-karma,* the senses are withdrawn into the mind. Then the dying person can think but cannot see. He cannot speak. No organ will function. He is practically dead. He will be lying on his bed without life, as it were, yet life is there.

As long as the mind is not withdrawn into a higher reality in him, he can think. Otherwise, even thinking is not

possible. At the last moment, when a person is just about to pass away, thinking stops. Not only speech and senses stop their activities, even the mind stops its functions and he cannot think. If you speak to that person, he will not reply. He will not react. He will not give any indication of having heard your sound. That is the condition where not only the senses are withdrawn into the mind, but the mind also is withdrawn into the *pranas.* There is only breathing, neither thinking nor sensing. Then people say the person is still alive. He breathes. Some bring cotton and keep it near the nostrils to see if he is alive. If the cotton moves it means he is alive, otherwise he is gone.

So the first stage of withdrawal is the absorption of the senses into the mind. The second stage of withdrawal is the absorption of the mind into the *prana* wherein the breathing process continues, life exists, but there is no thinking and there is no sensation. Then what happens? The breath also gets withdrawn into the fire principle which is what we call the heat in the system. As long as there is heat in the system, you say there is the element of life. If the heat also has gone, the whole body becomes cold and limbs are chill. Then we lose all hope; it is finished. *Prana* is also withdrawn into the fire principle. *Vang-manasi sampadyate, manah prane, pranah tejasi*—so, when senses are gone, mind is there; when the mind has gone, the *prana* is there; when the *prana* has gone, mere heat or fire is there. Fire or heat is the last thing which is in a person on the verge of leaving this world and entering the other world. When the heat also is withdrawn into the Supreme Being—

tejah parasyam devatayam—then there is no consciousness and there is no bodily life.

Individual life gets extinguished by a gradual process of absorption of the external functions into the internal ones until they are withdrawn finally into the General Reality, *Samanya Satta*, in all things. The person enters into a state like that of deep sleep. He does not know what has happened to him. He cannot know that he is dying. That is unconsciousness. There is a sudden shift of emphasis from one level of being to another. One cannot know that one has fallen asleep. However much one may be trying one's best to keep a watch on the process of going to sleep, one will not know it. One is suddenly in it. That is all. Either you are not sleeping or you are sleeping. You cannot be just midway between the two. Likewise with a person when he enters into this Generality of Being where he becomes totally unconscious of particularities and has lost contact with this world of externality. This happens at the time of the withdrawal of the individual soul into the Supreme Soul in the process of Liberation, and also at the time of death. So, from the point of view of the external occurrences of the various phenomena of withdrawal, death and Liberation are identical. What happens to a person when dying, happens also to a person in Liberation. But there is a great difference. The difference is obvious. It needs no explanation. The person is not cast into the wilderness or thrown into an oblivion when he enters the higher stages of conscious expansion. On the other hand, there is unconscious and compulsive pushing back of the functions into their sources at the time of death. In death there is no

transcendence. There is only automatic withdrawal. But, in the process of Self-realisation there is transcendence, so that there is no coming back. When you have outgrown a particular level of experience, you do not come back to it. But, if you have been forced to wrench yourself from a particular experience, the desire for that experience still lingers and you will have to come back to complete your experience.

2. *Atha yada'sya vanmanasi sampadyate, manah prane, pranastejasi, tejah parasyam devatayam, atha na janati.*
3. *Sa ya eso'nima aitad atmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma tat-tvam-asi, svetaketo, iti; bhuya eva ma bhagavan vijnapayatv iti; tatha, saumya, iti hovaca.*

When a person dies he knows nothing because he enters the Being of all beings, though unconsciously. This Being consciously realised in the supreme 'experience' we call God-realisation or Self-realisation, and into which one is cast unconsciously at the time of death and sleep, is the ultimate Reality. This is the essence and this is the Self of all. "Thou art That, O Svetaketu," thus instructs Uddalaka once more. "My dear father, explain further," says Svetaketu.

Now the teaching is about to conclude with one more example. In ancient times, there was a system of finding out who was the thief. The method was to gather all the suspected ones and bring them to the court of the king, and under the order of the king, a heated axe would be brought and they would be asked to touch it. The principle is that a

culprit will be burnt by touching the heated axe, whereas one who is innocent will not be burnt. There is a similarity of touching in either case, but there is the dissimilarity of being burnt or not burnt. This is an example that Svetaketu is told by his father Uddalaka, to make a distinction between the realised soul and the ignorant soul.

SECTION 16

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (CONTD.)

Illustration of the Ordeal

1. *Purusam, saumya, uta hasta-grahitam anayanti apaharsit steyam akarsit parasum asmai tapata iti; sa yadi tasya karta bhavati, tata evanrtam atmanam kurute, so 'nrtabhisandho 'nrtenatmanam antardhaya parasum taptam pratigrhnati, sa dahyate' tha hanyate.*
2. *Atha yadi tasyakarta bahvati, tata eva satyam atmanam kurute, sa satyabhisandhah satyenatmanam antardhaya parasum taptam pratigrhnati, sa na dahyate atha mucyate.*

The servants of the king catch hold of a man and say, "Here is the culprit, here is the thief, here is the robber, heat the axe for him." If a person who has told a lie is asked to touch the heated axe, naturally, the fault will be made visible outside by the burning of the hands, and then he is punished by the consequences of his actions. But, if a person who has not committed any fault, who is only suspected, is brought to the court, then when he touches the axe he is not burnt, and he is released. So is the case

with the soul that is really bound or not bound. Being in the body or not being in the body is not the criterion. Just as touching the axe is common to both the suspected one and the guilty one, but the consequences are different, so is the case with people who have knowledge and no knowledge. In spite of the fact that both are in the body and both pass through the same stages of ascent from the grosser to the subtle, the man without knowledge is bound, while the one with knowledge is liberated. The realised soul may be in the body as long as the prarabdha continues, just as a bound soul is in the body. But the difference is that the bodily presence or existence affects the bound soul, while it does not affect the mind of the liberated soul. That condition in which the soul resides in the body with knowledge is called jivanmukti, liberation while living. The body is there, but it does not affect the consciousness. The mind has the power to bear the pains brought about by the existence of the body. The exhilarations coming through the contact of the body with the objects of sense desired for and liked, and the pains coming due to contact of the senses with objects disliked and hated,—neither of them affect the soul that is liberated.

There are some teachers who give another example, the example of a coconut inside a shell. They say, the coconut that is raw sticks to the shell. That is the condition of the bound soul. Consciousness sticks to the shell of this body. But in the case of the liberated soul, it is inside the body, no doubt, but is not sticking to the body, even as the dry coconut is not touching the shell. It makes a sound inside if we shake it. It is detached from the shell, though it is there

tentatively. Even so, consciousness is not confined to the body, even though it is inside.

In spite of the fact that the senses are withdrawn into the mind, the mind is withdrawn into the *prana,* the *prana* into the fire or heat in the system, and heat into the Supreme Being, in both cases, in the case of the liberated, it is a gradual transcendence and a conscious process of ascent. When one consciously moves in a particular direction towards one's destination, one knows what is happening, what one is moving through, what are the stages one has crossed, what is the distance still ahead, etc. When one knows the distance that has yet to be covered, one is not fatigued on the way, because one is aware of how much one has already covered. One is fully conscious of every stage of the travel or journey. But, suppose one does not know what the distance is, how much one has covered, how much is left and whether the direction towards which one marches is correct or not. One then feels much fatigued. In addition to all this, suppose one is blindfolded; then we know what the suffering of that man is. This is the difference between a liberated one while living in the body and the one that is unliberated and caught in the body. This is the difference between self-transcendence in liberation and compulsive withdrawal of the senses in death. This is the difference between death and Self-realisation. This is also the difference between sleep and Self-realisation. The desires of the mind are not destroyed in sleep, and therefore there is return to the waking or dreaming state after sleep. The desires of the mind are not destroyed even in death, and therefore, there is reincarnation after death. But the

desires of the mind are destroyed in Self-realisation, and therefore, there is no return.

The cause of the birth of a body in the process of reincarnation is the presence of a desire for a particular experience. The *karmas* referred to as *sanchita* constitute the reservoir of the potencies of actions which emerge out one day or the other, as a plant emerges from a seed. The seed may be lying in dry soil waiting for the rain and suitable conditions or circumstances to sprout up. Even so are the *sanchita-karmas,* which are the seeds for future rebirths. The conditions suitable for the sprouting have not yet come, because the *prarabdha-karma* prevents their manifestation. The pressure of the *prarabdha,* which is under the process of experience, does not allow the sprouting up of other *karmas* in the *sanchita* group, because of the weight of the former, and so they, the latter, lie in ambush waiting for an opportunity to rise up. When the *prarabdha* is over, which means to say the experiences which one has to undergo through this body are exhausted, then there is death. Then the next set of *karmas* comes up. That is the conditioning factor of the new birth. What one will become in the next life, in the next incarnation, will depend upon the nature of the next set of strong or important *karmas* lying in ambush in the reservoir of the *sanchita.* These are difficult things to understand, because one cannot know which *karma* comes up for maturation. Whether one action gives rise to one birth or two births, or whether two or three actions join together to give a birth, or many actions join together to give one birth, whether the *karmas* of this birth give rise to the next birth, or whether

the *karmas* of some other previous birth come into action and give birth to the next body, all this cannot be understood by one who is not omniscient. But, the principle is this, that actions which are performed leave behind them a residue called *apurva* which becomes the content of the *sanchita* or the *anandamaya-kosa* within us. We carry them wherever we go, and these are not destroyed even if death takes place, because death is nothing but the exhaustion of a particular allotted portion of *karma* and not the entirety of it. But the *sanchita* is destroyed by the fire of knowledge in the case of a person who has attained Self-realisation. So there is no rebirth for him.

Thus the distinction is drawn between a person who ascends to the Reality consciously by self-transcendence and the other one who merely dies for taking another birth. This is, in essence, the teaching of Uddalaka to Svetaketu, in this section.

First, the sage starts by giving an explanation of the process of creation, how the objective universe is created from the Supreme Being, the *Sat,* and by means of the triplicated elements of fire, water and earth,—how everything in the world in all creation is constituted of these three elements only in spite of the variety of particulars. He then explains that inside the body also these very same principles work and that what the world outside is made of, of that this body also is made. Then he describes how the mind and the *pranas* are also influenced tremendously by the activity of these three elements,—fire, water and earth,—so that the external universe as well as the individual within are both constituted of the same

elements, and that essentially they are indistinguishable. He has explained how this one Being is present both outwardly in the universe and also inwardly in the individual. Then he has told us that this Being is the goal of realisation of all individuals and that this Being is present subtly in every particular manifestation. He has also said that It is invisible to the eyes, because It is the Subject of all knowledge, that It is the all-pervasive principle, It is the subtlest essence and that It is the background of all existence, and therefore, the senses and the mind cannot perceive It. Ordinary knowledge, he has said, is inadequate here and It can be known only through the grace and guidance of one's own Guru or master; and when a knower lives in the world with this body as other people live in this body, we draw a distinction between the former's way of living and conducting himself and the ordinary people's way of living. For all practical, outward purposes, the liberated man and the bound man look alike. One cannot know who is a *Jivanmukta* and who is a bound one, for both speak in the same way, eat in the same way, live in the same way. The distinction is within. It is that the liberated one knows what he is, whereas in the other case he does not know what he really is. So, here is the distinction between knowledge and ignorance, and here is also the explanation of the path to liberation as propounded by Sage Uddalaka.

Chapter Three

SANATKUMARA'S INSTRUCTIONS ON BHUMA-VIDYA

In the course of the study of the Panchagni-Vidya in the first chapter, we have discovered that life is ultimately all sorrow on account of one being subjected to the process of transmigration. It is a fact that there are higher pressures exerted upon the individual and that these pressures compel one to be driven along the course of creativity. As long as the cause of this pressure is not realised as identical with one's own Self, one is not going to attain ultimate freedom from *samsara,* the cycle of metempsychosis. This cause for ultimate freedom is the Self of all, the realisation of which bestows true freedom. And that Self is the Universal Reality. This has been told to us in the subsequent section dealing with the Vaisvanara-Vidya in the same chapter. Then in the second chapter which corresponds to the sixth chapter of the Upanishad, the subject has been continued in a different fashion altogether. There it has been explained through various analogies, comparisons and illustrations as to how there can be only one Being and that every detail in creation is only a form taken by this one Being in the process of creation, so that there is really only one Being and not two, and that Being is the Self, the Atman.

Now, we are moving towards the seventh chapter of the Upanishad, which is a very prominent one because it expounds the magnificent doctrine of the Bhuma, the Absolute, the plenum of Being, the fullness of Reality, and this is done in a Socratic manner, gradually taking the mind

of the student from the lowest reality conceivable to the highest, stage by stage, indicating thereby that nothing is lost when the Absolute is realised. When God is attained, nothing of the world is lost, just as when we catch the original we cannot be said to have lost the shadow. Everything is gained in a supersensible manner. The shadow may be said to be a part of the original. It is included in the original. All the lesser degrees of Reality are only forms of Its manifestation. Every name and form in this creation is a lesser degree of manifestation of the Reality. The lower degree is not excluded from the higher degree, as the higher includes the lower, and the highest is everything and is all-inclusive. This is the subject of this chapter which begins with the great sage Narada approaching the master Sanatkumara for spiritual instructions and spiritual solace.

Narada was not only learned in all the arts and sciences, but was himself a great saint and a sage. There was practically nothing that he did not know. He is renowned in all the epics and the Puranas as a unique personality in many ways. He could travel throughout this earth, the atmosphere and the heavens and talk to the gods personally. He had, therefore, a free passport, as it were, to move through every realm and every plane of Being. Such was his capacity, such was his greatness, and such was his knowledge and power. Such a renowned person now comes as a disciple, a student, to the son of Brahma, Sanatkumara; he pleads his ignorance, and expresses his grief over the fact that he knows so many things but does not have peace of mind in spite of all this knowledge. There is something

missing in spite of every kind of learning of which he is a master and in which he has specialised. "Great Sir, teach me. I have come to you as a humble student." This is how Narada, a master, a sage himself, approaches the divine teacher Sanatkumara.

SECTION 1

Name

1. *Adhihi, bhagavah, iti, hopasasada sanatkumararam naradah, tam hovaca: yad-vettha tena mopasida, tatas-ta urdhvam vaksyamiti, sa hovaca.*
2. *Rgvedam, bhagavah, adhyemi, yajurvedam, samavedam, atharvedam caturtham, itihasa-puranam pancamam, vedanam vedam, pitryam, rasim, daivam, nidhim, vakovakyam, ekayanam, devavidyam, brahma-vidyam, bhuta-vidyam, ksatra-vidyam, naksatra-vidyam, sarpadevajana-vidyam, etat, bhagavah adhyemi.*

Narada approaches Sanatkumara and says: "Great Sir, master, divine sage, here I am at your feet. Teach me." It was a very simple request. "Teach me." "What should I teach you? What is your difficulty? You are yourself a very learned person. Let me know what you already know. And if there is anything left, I shall tell you that. What is the education that you have already acquired? Tell me that. Then I will speak to you—*Yad-vetta tena mopasida, tatasta urdhvam vaksyamiti*." This is the reply of Sanatkumara to Narada.

Narada says: "Great master, I have studied the Rigveda. I am proficient in it. I have studied the Yajurveda. I am a

master of it. I am an expert in the Samaveda. I know the Atharvaveda. I am a master of the epics and the Puranas and I know everything about grammar. Nothing is unknown to me. I know mathematics, I know augury, I know the science of treasures and I am an expert in logic. I know ethics and politics, I know astrology and astronomy, I know the six auxiliary limbs of the Vedas, I know physical science, and I know music, art and dancing. There is nothing practically through the course of which I have not passed. This is what I have learnt, my dear master. So, I have answered your question of what I have already studied." He has a degree in every science and every art. So here is the list of all the certificates that Narada has. This is what he has studied. "All this is only name," says Sanatkumara. "All this knowledge is nothing. That is why you have no peace." He puts dust over everything.

3. *So'ham, bhagavah, mantra-vid-evasmi na'tma-vit; srutum hyeva me bhagavad-drsebhyah, tarati sokam, atmavid-iti; so'ham bhagavah, socami, tam ma, bhagavan, sokasya param tarayatviti; tam hovaca yad-vai kincaitad adhyagisthah, namaivaitat.*

Narada says: "Yes, these are only words, really speaking. These are only nomenclatures. This is only a catalogue or list of the branches of learning that I have studied. I have heard from other people that a person who knows the Self crosses over sorrow. What is this Self? I am in sorrow. I am in a state of grief in spite of all this learning that I have. I have come to you, great master, with a request to take me beyond the ocean of sorrow. I am in internal suffering which has not been relieved by my learning and knowledge.

So'ham, bhagavah, mantra-vid-evasmi na'tma-vit—I have a lot of information about every art and every science. I do not know the real substance of these arts and sciences. The name is known, but the content is not known to me."

Everything that is an indicator has an indicated. Every name has a form corresponding to it. If we utter a particular name corresponding to an object, we immediately have an idea of that object. But we do not possess that object merely because we have an idea of that object. So is the case with all this learning. It is only an idea about certain things, but the things themselves are beyond one's control. We can have an idea of the inner structure of the sun, the solar system, but we cannot have any sway over the sun or any control over the sun because of that knowledge alone. We may have information about every blessed thing in the world. This is only an ideological knowledge of the contents of everything in this world. But by such knowledge they do not come under our control. They are not our property. They cannot be said to help us in any manner whatsoever. So, this is the position of the theoretical learning of Narada. And so is the case with any kind of theoretical learning. It has no connection with the Reality, with the fact as such, with that indicated by the name. So, Narada is a knower of the *mantras*, the names, the ideas. He has an intellectual knowledge, theoretical information. He is an expert in understanding the nature of things, but the Self of these things is beyond him. He has not known the Self of these things.

Narada says: "*Srutam hyeva me bhagavad-drsebhyah tarati sokam atma-vit*—even from people like you, I have

heard once that if one knows the Self of a thing, he would be free from sorrow. *Soham bhagavah sochami*— here I am a specimen of sorrow seated before you. *Tam ma, bhagavan, sokasya param tarayatv-iti*—I have no other resort except you, O great master. Take me across this sea of sorrow."

Sanatkumara replies: "There is a great point in whatever you have learnt, no doubt, but this knowledge has not helped you for the simple reason that nothing can help you unless it is a part of your Being, unless it is a part of your Self. Nothing that is outside you can be of any help to you. Anything that is extraneous to your Self is not going to free you from sorrow. The source of your sorrow is what is outside you and that is an external self for you. It is not the Primary Self. Thus, the knowledge that you have about these things which you have mentioned just now is not the knowledge of the Self of these things, but the knowledge of the names of these things, the nomenclature of these things, and you have an idea of all these things. This is what they call theoretical knowledge of the things in the world. But what is the good of it? So, my dear Narada, all this is name only: these are words, all this is language, this is theory, this is information, nothing more than this. As a matter of fact, what you enumerated just now, Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Itihasas, Puranas, this science, that science, this art, that art;—all this is nothing but words and words. They seem to tell you a lot, but they cannot ultimately help you unless you enter into their Being, unless you become their Self."

4. *Nama va rg-vedo yajur-vedah pitryo-rasir-daivo, nidhir vakovakyam, ekayanam, deva-vidya, brahma-vidya, bhuta-vidya, ksatra-vidya, naksatra-vidya, sarpa-deva-jana-vidya, namaivaitat, namopassveti.*

Sanatkumara continues: "Now, well, I will tell you once again that this is only theory, and therefore, it is not of much consequence in your life, but it has an importance in that it is the beginning of knowledge. Therefore, meditate on 'name'."

Though mere information is not of any ultimate utility in one's practical life, it is not without some utility, because learning begins with gathering of information. The idea of an object precedes the real knowledge of the object. Unless we have some concept of the object, how can we approach the object at all? The concept by itself is not the substance, no doubt, but we have to approach the substance through the concept, through the idea. Practice comes after theory. If we have not theoretical knowledge of a thing, we will have no scientific background of any particular art or science. Then we cannot master that thing, the art or science. The technological application of the knowledge is subsequent to the mastery of the theory of it, as is the case with every science, every art, every branch of learning. So, when Sanatkumara says that it is all 'name' only in one way, what he means is that it is not of ultimate value, which is the reason why Narada is not really happy. But yet it has a meaning, because it is the initial step in the process of the ascent of the soul to the Supreme Reality.

From the lowest degree of manifestation, one has to gradually ascend step by step, from the first to the second

and then to the third, the fourth, and so on. What appears to us at the very outset in this physical life of ours is that objects are outside us, that the world is external to us. And we have therefore only information by way of nomenclature about these things. This is the first stage towards the knowledge of the things. When we wish to gain knowledge of any object, the first thing that we do is to gain information about that object. We get a descriptive knowledge of that object. This is what is meant here when Sanatkumara says that all Narada has learnt is only 'name'. The name of an object includes every kind of information about the object. Thus, says Sanatkumara to Narada: "You, first of all, assure yourself that you have a complete knowledge of objects insofar as their name goes. Though beyond that you cannot go, at least within that realm, be a master. You must have a correct descriptive knowledge of these things."

Now, the whole principle of the ascent of the soul to higher stages of realisation is that unless that law operating in the lower realm is fully fulfilled, the higher cannot be reached. When we say that the lower is inadequate, we do not mean that it is bereft of all reality. It has an element of truth in it. And, every degree of reality is meaningful to the extent of the law operating within it. We have to master it, not by excluding it or disregarding it, but by having a thorough knowledge of it, to the extent it goes, by obeying the laws of that particular realm in which we find ourselves at any given moment of time. We cannot close our eyes to the action and reaction produced by the operation of the laws in a particular realm or degree of reality. We should

not invoke the laws of a higher realm when we are involved in a lower realm of existence.

This is the mistake that many people make even in the practice of spiritual life. They suddenly think that they are God-men or that they are about to jump into the ocean of God-consciousness and drink the nectar of ambrosia. They are caught hold of by their very legs through the laws that operate in the physical world. Knowledge does not mean ignorance of any particular aspect of experience. It is a total comprehension of fact as such. Even bondage has to be known in its true structure. When we are bound, we must know why we are bound. That is real knowledge. You cannot say, "Well, I am not concerned with the stages of bondage, I am concerned with freedom." What is freedom? It is knowledge of the causative factors behind bondage. The cure of an illness begins with the knowledge of the causative factors of illness behind it, knowledge of the aetiology, pathology, diagnosis, etc., of the whole suffering of the patient, and then only the medicine comes. So, it is necessary to know where we are placed. We should not have any kind of misgivings about where we are actually situated. Are we in the physical world, or are we in the social atmosphere of people? Where are we caught up? We are caught up in an intricate network of life which reveals itself in various degrees of experience.

Now, each degree has to be paid its due. As they say, we must pay the devil its due. Though it is a devil, it does not matter; the due has to be paid. Then only we can be free from its clutches. The devil here is nothing but the law that operates in a particular realm. The world of externality,

objectivity, is the realm in which we live, and therefore, we can go only to the extent of the law that operates in this world. The lowest degree of knowledge, as has been pointed out, is informative knowledge of objects. If there is a mountain in front of you, a mile away from you, you cannot have any knowledge about it except that it is of such-and-such dimension and is located at such a distance, etc. So, Sanatkumara points out that to the extent name goes, to the extent theoretical learning goes, to that extent we should be masters. Whatever be the degree of reality in which we are, we should be masters of that. "When you go to Rome, be a Roman"—this is a very good adage which means to say that we must be friendly with the atmosphere in which we are, whatever the atmosphere be, and we must be in harmony with the law operating there. Then we become a master of that atmosphere; otherwise, we will come to loggerheads with the external environment.

So, *namopassva*—the first stage of meditation—is mentioned here, which is ideological. It is conceptual. We may call it theoretical. It is the operation of the mind in respect of an object. The object is not under one's control. It is far away. We have only a thought of the object. But, that is enough for the time being, because we are in that level only.

So, we should meditate on the name. Every stage of meditation or transcendence mentioned here is a stage of the identification of the self with that particular degree of reality. This is very important to remember. We will be taken gradually from stage to stage. When we are taken to a higher stage, what is implied is that the lower stage has

already become a part of our own self in deep meditation and experience. It does not remain any more an object outside. When we have become that in self-absorption, then only we can be given access to the realm of a higher degree of reality. "So, now as the first step, *namopassva,* this is what you can do, Narada," says Sanatkumara. We should complete the process of absorbing the contents of our knowledge, to the extent they can go in this world, by deep meditation. This is conceptual meditation.

5. *Sa yo nama brahmeti upaste yavan-namno gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yo nama brahmetyupaste'sti, bhagavah, namno bhuya iti; namno vava bhuyo'stiti, tan-me bhagavan bravitviti.*

Whoever contemplates 'name' as Brahman, which means to say, whoever regards the object of meditation as absolute, gains whatever that object includes within its gamut. The principle of meditation is this: whatever the object of your meditation be, that has to be taken as absolute. There should not be anything external to it, because if the mind conceives something higher than that particular object, then that higher thing becomes the object of meditation. The point is that the object that you have chosen for your meditation should be the last point of the reach of your mind, beyond which it cannot go. Then it becomes the absolute. So this absolute is only a name that we give to the best possible reach of the mind in any level or degree of experience. 'Name is Brahman'—this means name is the absolute, inasmuch as we are in a realm of names only. Why should we not take the higher degree as the absolute, and not the lower one? Because the higher one

cannot be the content of the mind in its present state. Suppose we are asked to meditate on the heavenly regions. We cannot, because we do not know what it means. The heavenly regions are beyond the reach of the mind. We will only superimpose physical pictures of our imagination on paradise, *Brahma-loka*, etc. This is not what is intended. We must limit ourselves to the extent of our knowledge, and complete the meditation regarding that particular object as absolute in itself. So, Narada was asked to take 'name' as the absolute. The result of this meditation on name is that to the extent name goes—to the extent of the reach of the mind theoretically, conceptually—to that extent, the meditator will be free.

We know very well that there are learned people in this world, very educated people, masters of science, etc. They have freedom within that realm, but not beyond that. To the extent their knowledge can go, to the extent of the applicability of their learning, there is freedom for them. But where their knowledge is not applicable, there is no freedom for them. So it depends upon the realm in which one finds oneself. If one is in an academic realm, the academic knowledge helps. But, it will not help when one is in the middle of a river or the ocean where another kind of knowledge is necessary. It will not help when one is threatened with some kind of catastrophe in life where again another kind of knowledge is necessary. So the knowledge that one gains is helpful to a person within the limit of the operation of that knowledge, within the realm in which it works, and to the extent of the operation of the law pertaining to that branch of learning.

Whoever meditates thus on 'name' as Brahman has freedom in this manner, to that extent of, and in that particular realm of, the name only. Narada asks: "Is there not anything more than this?" "Yes, there is something more than this," replies Sanatkumara. "What is that something which is more than the name?" again asks Narada.

SECTION 2

Speech

1. *Vag-vava namno bhuyasi, vag-va rg-vedam vijnapayati, yajurvedam, sama-vedam, atharvanam caturtham, itihasa-puranam pancamam, vedanam vedam, pitryam, rasim, daivam nidhim, vakovakyam, ekayanam, deva-vidyam, brahma-vidyam, bhuta-vidyam, ksatra-vidyam, naksatra-vidyam, sarpa-devajana-vidyam, divam ca prthivim ca vayum cakasam capas-ca tejas-ca devamsca manusyams-ca pasums-ca vayamsi ca trna vanaspatin-svapadani akita-patanga-pipilakam dharmam cadharmam ca satyam canrtam ca sadhu casadhu ca hrdayajnam cahrdayajnam ca; yad-vai van nabhavisyat na dharmo nadharmo vyajnapayisyat, na satyam nanrtam na sadhu na'sadhu na hrdayajno na'hrdayajna vag-evaitat sarvam vijnapayati, vacam upassveti.*

That which causes the expression of the name is greater than the name. Linguistic designation or definition in respect of an object has at its background the science of speech. This is what they call the science of linguistics. The

general nomenclature or the groups of names in respect of objects are all particularised, applied forms of an inner science which is linguistics, which is the principle of speech itself. Speech is a verbal expression of force that is generated in one's own self. In occult circles, we are told that behind the verbal expression or the utterance of speech, there are subtler operations taking place inside the body and these stages of inner working are called in the language of those occult sciences, *para, pasyanti, madhyama* and *vaikhari*. *Vaikhari* is the outer-most expression. The audible expression of speech is called *vaikhari*. This is what we call name, when it is identified with particular objects. But the inner aspect of it is the principle of speech, *para-vak*. So, the very scientific principle that is behind the utterance of names, speech, as it is by itself, is higher than name. So Narada is told that speech is higher than 'name'. All that one learns, all the Vedas and all these sciences, everything has speech as its background. Because of the principle of speech that is there at the back of the expressions of this theoretical learning, this learning has become possible. Thus, speech may be said to be the cause for name. The cause is superior to the effect. Everything conceivable is ultimately included in the expression of language. Not only these sciences and arts, but also all the elements, the earth and heavens, all these are also known only by name, and therefore, by speech.

Sanatkumara has given a list of every conceivable thing in this world,—all the objects of sense, the five elements, all the living beings in every kind of species, everything that you can conceptually know, pleasure and pain, knowable

and unknowable, righteousness and unrighteousness, virtue and vice, good and bad, this, that and what not, every blessed thing in this world. All these are objects of knowledge, about which Narada has plenty of information and whose names he is acquainted with. Speech is superior to all this because it is the causative factor behind the names of these objects. So, if one has a complete knowledge of the principle of speech, the science of speech itself, then one will know about all languages, and therefore, of every science that is expressed in language. Whoever meditates on speech as the absolute gains everything that is possible within the limits of speech.

2. *Sa yo vacam brahmeti upaste, yavad-vaco gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yo vacam brahmety-upaste; asti, bhagavah, vaco bhuya iti, vaco vava bhuyo'stiti, tan-me, bhagavan, bravitviti.*

One is free to the extent of one's knowledge. So, knowledge is power. This is a great conclusion that we can draw from these descriptions of the nature of knowledge. Wherever there is real knowledge, there is also power to the extent of the operation of that knowledge. And knowledge becomes power only to the extent of the applicability of that knowledge in respect of the object to which it pertains. If a particular knowledge is not applicable, it is not power. It will be only theoretical learning. So Narada is told, "To the extent of the operation of the principle of speech, you are free; meditate upon speech as the Absolute, because beyond that your mind cannot go."

"But is there anything beyond speech?" asks Narada. "Yes, there is something beyond that," replies Sanatkumara.

"If it is so, please instruct me on it," is the next prayer of Narada.

The principle of speech, or whatever blessed thing there can be as the precedent of the expression of language—all that is controlled by the mind. Without the functioning of the mind, there would neither be expression of speech, nor any language, nor definition, nor learning. So naturally, mind is superior to speech, and speech is superior to name. The mind is the cause of all these expressions.

SECTION 3

Mind

1. *Mono vava vaco bhuyah, yatha vai dve vamalake dve va kole dvau vaksau mistir-anubhavati, evam vacam ca nama ca mano'nu-bhavati, sa yada manasa manasyati, mantran-adhiyiyeti, athadhite, karmani kurviyeti, atha kurute, putrams-ca pasumsceccheyeti, athecchate, imam ca lokam amum ceccheyeti, athecchate, mano-hy-atma, mano-hi loko mano hi brahma, mano upassveti.*
2. *Sa yo mano brahmetyupste yavan-manaso gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yo mano brahmetyupaste 'sti bhagavo manaso bhuya iti manaso vava bhuyo'stiti tanme bhagavan bravatviti.*

Beyond speech, and superior to speech, is the mind. Here is glorification of the functions of the mind, the capacity of the mind. Mind is superior, naturally, because unless the mind functions well, there would be no speech, no nomenclature and no learning. "Just as," says Sanatkumara, "two small fruits like mulberry or berry can

be held together in the fist of the hand, just as the palm of one's hand folded contains within its fold two small fruits or objects, so does the mind contain within itself both speech and name." Speech and name are contained within the mind. This is the power of the mind. Whatever we do, we do only through the mind. We know it very well. We think first before we express ourselves in speech or utter a name. We think, "Let me do work," and then we start working. We think, "Let me have this, and let me have that," and then we put forth effort in that direction. We begin to perform various types of actions in this world, after thinking first. So, thinking is prior to every other deed or effort.

Mind is supreme in life. It is well known to every one of us. The mind is practically our own self. When we refer to ourselves usually, in practical life, we are referring to the mind only. "It is me," we say. What do we mean by "me"? We are referring to the mind, nothing more than that. And mind has assumed the selfhood, by superimposition of characters. Selfhood really does not belong to the mind. As the mirror shines in sunlight, so does the mind assume selfhood by the transference of the character of the Self into itself. So, for all practical purposes in life, mind is the self and it is the individuality within us. The mind is responsible for anything that we achieve in this world or in the other world, because what we call world is nothing but the field of experience. The range of our experience is the world in which we are living. And all the experiences of our life are nothing but the expression of the actions that we perform, behind which there is the mind that thinks. So,

our world of experience is actually controlled and directed by the mind. Therefore we may say that, in a sense, mind is the world. "As the mind is yourself in this empirical realm, O Narada, meditate on mind as Brahman, the Absolute," says Sanatkumara.

Whatever the mind can think, that should be brought within the purview of the object of meditation. This is perhaps the last stage which ordinary people can reach in meditation. What can they do beyond the level of the thoughts of their mind? So, we should try to find out what are the possibilities of the mind, and bring all of them together into a stage of harmony, in an artistic manner. The pattern of thought should be beautiful. It should be complete. This is the meaning of the term 'absolute' here. We have to remember this again. The absolute is the completeness of any particular concept, whatever the concept be. So here, we have to reach the ultimate point possible by the mind. The arrangement of the conceptual objects should be such that nothing should be left out of purview. The reason for the movement of the mind away from the object chosen for meditation is the presence of a subtle feeling within, that there is something outside the object—beyond it, above it, higher than it. The mind should include every blessed thing, so that there is no chance of the mind going away from the object. The mental object here is not any particular symbol of a physical object, but includes everything that the mind can think. This is the object of meditation instructed in this section.

"So, O Narada, here you are in the mental realm of meditation. Consider mind as all, and master it in such a

way that it becomes one with your Being, and does not remain merely an external function of your outward living over which you have no control. It is yours. You are a master of your mind; it has become you," says Sanatkumara.

This generally does not happen in practical life. Though we say that the mind is "me", we are not masters of the mind. There are many occasions when it is revealed to us, to our surprise and sorrow, that the mind is not our self, though wrongly we do say, "my mind is me". If mind is "me", well, I should be a complete master of it. But it is not the case. As the wind blows, the mind goes in various directions, and we are drifted in the direction of the wind of the mind. So the mind acts as a master. It does not act as our own Self. So it is not true that the mind is the true Self. But it has to be absorbed into the Self in meditation in order that it gets controlled. Complete control of a particular thing is exercised only to the extent of the absorption of that particular thing into one's own Self. Anything that is one with us is controlled by us, and of that we are masters. We are not masters of anything that is outside us. So, in the realm of the mind, we should be masters. We should control the mind completely and rule over it, by identification of our true Being with everything that the mind can think. This is one stage in the process of meditation.

"Revered Sir, is there anything greater than mind?"—asks Narada, and Sanatkumara replies, "Yes, surely there is will, *sankalpa,* which is greater than mind."

SECTION 4

Will

In the gradation of meditation, we have seen that the mind is superior to the function of speech, of which all the names are manifestations, because from the mind proceed all psychological activities and everything that is expressed through speech. But, behind the mind also, there are forces which are more concentrated in their nature, and by an analysis of the activities of the mind, we will realise that this is the activity of specified thought. There is a creative will operating as the directive intelligence. This 'will' is termed *sankalpa* in Sanskrit. A determination or will in the mind precedes action. So, 'will' is prior to the general thinking faculty of the mind.

1. *Samkalpo vava manaso bhuyan-yada vai samkalpayate' atha manasyati, atha vacam-irayati tam u namnirayati, namni mantra ekam bhavanti, mantresu karmani.*

Will, which is creative in its character, is superior to ordinary thought. When there is a will or a determined activity of the psychological organ, there arises the general thinking of the mind. Then follows the expression thereof by means of speech. Everything that we utter or recite or chant is a form of speech. And the quintessence of speech in its most sacred form is the body of *mantras* in the Vedas. The *mantras* contained in the texts called Brahmanas in the Vedas direct men to specified actions by means of injunctions. The *mantras* are like fire, great forces of directive intelligence. The *mantras* imply within themselves

indications as to how they are to be utilised in a particular performance. So, actions which lead to specific results and the consequent experiences in life are all rooted in the hints given in the *mantras* themselves, which are specified modes of the expression of speech, which again is rooted in the mind, which in its turn is directed by the will, the creative intelligence.

So, this is the gradation given so far. Everything is rooted in the will, ultimately. Will is a general term which comprehends within itself any kind of specified intention, whether it works internally in the individual's personality or externally in nature. Here, the Upanishad tells us that everything has a specific intention behind its very existence itself. Even the five elements,—space, air, fire, water and earth,—are but specified forms of an ultimate creative will. Their manifestations in different intensities and the differences in the intensities of their manifestations are due to the differentiating character which is inherent in each of these elements. That differentiating character is the will hidden behind them. The will to be, the will to live, the will to exist, the will to maintain individuality is the power which distinguishes one element from the other. Otherwise, there would be a merger of the elements and one element would not be different from the other.

2. *Tani ha va etani samkalpaikayanani samkalpatmakani samkalpe pratisthitani, samaklpatam dyava-prthivi, samakalpetam vayu-scakasam ca, samkalpantapas-ca tejas-ca, tesam samklptyai varsam samkalpate, varsasya samklptya annam samkalpate annasya samklptyai pranah*

samkalpante sprananam samklptyai mantrah samkalpante, mantramam samklptyai karmani samkalpante, karmanam samklptyai lokah samkalpate, lokasya samklptyai sarvam samkcalpate, sa esa samkalpah samkalpam upassveti.

There is nothing in this world, in all creation, which is free from a self-assertive will, a self-determining power. So, 'will' is a universal power. Anything that asserts itself in a particular manner is called 'will'. This self-assertive nature is found in every atom of creation, in the heaven and the earth, in the wind and the space, in fire and water and in their further modifications, in our own bodies such as the working of the *pranas* and their further motivations like the recitation of *mantras* which, as has been pointed out already, become responsible for the actions that we do and the results that follow therefrom. The whole world, therefore, is rooted in will. The world is will in generality as well as in particularity. In certain forms of generality, the will becomes a content of our awareness. When it becomes too general, as in the will of God, for instance, it is not the content of our mind. However, the will is behind everything. This is the point that is driven home here. Therefore, Narada is instructed that higher than the mind, there is the will, and that he should direct his meditation or contemplation to the extent to which his will can reach.

3. *Sa yah samkalpam brahmety-upaste klptan-vai sa lokandhruvan dhruvah pratisthitan pratiisthito'vyathamanan-avyathamano abhisidhyati, yavat-samkalpasya gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yah samkalpam brahmety-*

upaste, asti, bhagavah, samkalpad-bhuya iti, samkalpad-vava bhuyo'stiti, tanme, bhagavan, bravitviti.

Will, therefore, has to be contemplated upon as absolute in its operation. One who contemplates in this manner or practises meditation in this way attains to regions which are capable of access by the extent of the will applied in these forms of meditation. One becomes fixed or rooted in one's own will and that which one reaches or experiences by means of this meditation also becomes equally firm or firmly fixed. These experiences will no more be transient, as the other things of the world are. The person who is rooted in such a will is not distressed in any manner whatsoever. The regions that he reaches also are free from any kind of distress. To the extent of the reach of his will, he shall achieve success in this world, and his success, therefore, depends upon the intensity of his will, the comprehensiveness of his will, and the clarity of his will. To that extent he will be free, he will be successful, and he will enjoy life—*yatha kamacaro bhavati.* This is the result that follows from meditation on the content of will, to the extent it can reach.

Narada queries, "Is this all, or is there something more than will?" "Yes, surely there is something more than will," says Sanatkumara. "But what is that? May I listen to it, great master? Please instruct me further, beyond will," requests Narada.

Section 5

Memory

1. *Cittam vava samkalpad-bhuyah, yada vai cetayate'tha samkalpayate, atha manasyati, atha vacam irayati, tam u namnirayati, namni mantra ekam bhavanti, mantresu karmani.*

The will, no doubt, is a determining psychological function. But the will cannot operate unless there is a cohesive force behind the functions of thought. Will is nothing but a collected focussing of the content of the mind. When the mind is directed and focussed in a particular manner, in a specified way, in a particular direction, we call it will. But this function of the mind which we call will would not be possible unless there is another capacity which we call memory. A person who is bereft of memory, and cannot even remember what took place one second before, cannot divert the will in any particular manner. Because the capacity of remembrance or retention of experiences, and the ability to maintain in one's own mind an awareness of the target towards which the will is going to be directed, are both necessary before the will rises up in the mind. This function which is precedent to the rise of the will is called *chitta*. It is the mind-stuff, as we may call it, which is the very basic root of all psychological functions. Will is a specific manifestation. There is a generality behind it and that is *chitta*. Beyond the will is *chitta*, the power of memory and retention. Only when one has presence of mind, one can direct one's will. Then only one can think, then only one can speak, then

only name, a specific modification of speech, is manifested. In the name, *mantras,* sacred formulae, sacrifices and other actions become one. And from actions proceed their results, all in a continuous chain.

2. *Tani ha va etani cittaikayanani cittatmani citte pratisthitani tasmad-yady-api bahu-vid-acitto bhavati, nayam astityevainam ahuh yad-ayam veda, yad-va ayam vidvannettam acittah syad-iti, atha yady-alpa-vicchittavan bhavati, tasma evota susrusante, cittam hy-evaisam ekayanam, cittam atma, cittam pratistha cittam upassveti.*

Everything is rooted in memory. All learning is ultimately memory, because it is the retention in the mind of whatever we have seen or heard or thought. Whatever be our learning, if our memory has failed, people say, "This person is nothing." Whatever be our education or acquisition of knowledge in its extensiveness, if we have lost all memory power, it is as good as nothing. All knowledge will practically vanish from us. So memory is very important. "If he was really learned, why does he not remember anything?"—people pose this question. They say, "He poses himself as very learned, but he cannot say anything; now, what sort of learning is this?" So, they repudiate the very learning of a person merely because of the absence of memory in that person. If we have strong memory power, whatever we speak will carry conviction. People listen to such a person, not to the other one who calls himself learned but cannot remember anything. So the personality is ultimately rooted in *chitta,* the capacity of remembering, which retains in itself all that is valuable in

the form of one's learning or in the form of any type of experience in life. "Therefore, O Narada, you have to hold that *chitta,* memory, is superior to will. So contemplate the content of the *chitta* which is superior to will. Let this be the object of your meditation."

3. *Sa yas-cittam brahmety-upaste, cittan vai sa lokan dhruvan dhruvah pratisthitan pratisthito'vyathamanan avyathamano'bhisidhyati, yavat cittasya gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yas-cittam brahety-upaste, asti, bhagavah, cittadbhuya iti, citted vava bhuyo'stiti, tan-me, bhagavan, bravitviti.*

The expansiveness of memory is larger than the content of will. Therefore, one who meditates on the content of memory attains all those realms which are capable of being reached by the operation of memory, and then enjoys identity of oneself with those realms. One becomes free and successful to the extent of the operation of one's memory. "Therefore let that be your meditation; this is the stage to which you have reached now by way of analysis and practice," says Sanatkumara. Narada is highly satisfied, but puts a question again, "Is there anything beyond *chitta*?" Sanatkumara answers, "There is something beyond that also." Though *chitta* is superior to the other functions, viz., name, speech, mind and will, already mentioned, it is inferior to something beyond that. Narada now wants to know what that is.

SECTION 6

Contemplation

1. *Dhyanam vava cittad-bhuyah, dhyayativa prthivi, dhya- yativan-tariksam, dhyayativa dyauh, dhyayantivapah, dhyayantiva parvatah, dhyayantiva deva-manusyah, tasmad-ya iha manusyanam mahattvam prapnuvanti dhyanapadamsa ivaiva te bhvanti, atha ye'lpah kalahinah pisuna upavadinas-te atha ye prabhavah dhyanapadamsa ivaiva te bhavanti, dhyanam upassveti.*

Dhyana, concentration, is beyond even ordinary memory. It is a superior faculty. The more you are able to concentrate your attention, rather to meditate in the proper sense of the term, to that extent you become superior to others. Concentration is fixity of mind. Wherever we find stability of any kind, fixity of any kind, we will discover the presence of concentration. Here, the passage of the Upanishad goes on to say that the earth contemplates, as it were, on account of its stability and fixity of character. We do not see any kind of chaotic activity in nature. There is a stability maintained by the various things of nature. The heaven and the earth themselves are contemplating or meditating, as it were, in a fixed form without creating any kind of confusion between themselves. We see the earth and the heaven and the waters, even the oceans, the sun and the moon, the stars, all maintain their position due to a concentratedness of their purpose inherent in their very nature brought into action by forces, of course, which are

superior, to be mentioned further on. Whoever has attained any kind of greatness in life has achieved it only through the power of concentration. Whether he is a god or a human being, success is due to the power of concentration of the mind, inherent applicability of the mind. The application of thought in a particular direction is the cause of success. The tenacity of the mind in a given direction and a persistent effort in that direction alone, without deviating the mind from the given thought, is concentration. The whole-souled absorption of thought on a particular object, to the exclusion of any other thought, is concentration. This is *dhyana.*

It is by this action of the mind that people have attained greatness in this world, not by distracted thinking. If we start thinking of a hundred things, we will achieve nothing. We should apply ourselves to one thing only at a time, apply our soul and heart to it and then we see that we succeed. This is the importance of the power of concentration. Those who lack the power of concentration and application of thought are the quarrelsome people of this world. They are the disturbers of society. They are the people who carry tales. They are the dregs of human society. Not so are those who have power of concentration of the mind. They apply wholly to their purpose to such an extent that they have no time at all to engage themselves in useless activity. Those who have the capacity to concentrate, they are the great ones. Therefore, one should always apply oneself to concentration and meditation.

2. *Sa yo dhyanam brahmety-upaste, yavad-dhyanasya gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yo*

dhyanam brahmcty-upaste, asti, bhagavah, dhyanad-bhuya iti, dhyanad-vava bhuyo'stiti tan-me, bhagavan, bravitv-iti.

It is difficult to explain the grand nature of the result that will follow by the practice of concentration. As a matter of fact, Yoga practice is nothing but concentration in various degrees of its manifestation. And as the Upanishad has beautifully put it, nothing in life has any sense or meaning when concentration is absent. One becomes free, liberated from bondage, and succeeds in life to the extent of success one has in the practice of concentration of mind. So, one should apply oneself to concentration which is superior to everything that has been mentioned earlier, viz., memory, will, mind, speech and name.

This is the stage Narada has reached now. Narada again asks: "O, great master, is there something greater than *dhyana,* concentration?" "Yes," says Sanatkumara, "there is something, because you cannot apply yourself to concentration unless you understand what concentration is." "Then, please instruct me on that which is superior to *dhyana,*" says Narada.

SECTION 7

Understanding

1. *Vijnanam vava dhyanad-bhuyah, vijnanena va rg-vedam vijanati yajur-vedam sama-vedam atharvanam caturtham, itihasapuranam pancamam, vedanam vedam, pitryam, rasim, daivam, nidhim vakovakyam, ekayanam, deva-*

vidyam, brahma-vidyam, bhuta-vidyam, ksatra-vidyam, naksatra-vidyam, sarpa-devajana vidyam, divam ca prthivim ca vayum cakasam capasa-ca tejas-ca, devams-ca manusyams-ca pasums-ca vayamsi ca trna-vanaspatin svapadanyakita-patanga-pipilakam dharmam cadharmam ca satyam canrtam ca sadhu casadhu ca hrdayajnam cahrdayajnam cannam ca rasam cemam ca lokam amum ca vijnanenaiva vijanati, vijnanam upassveti.

Vijnana, understanding, is superior even to the action of concentration. All the pros and cons of concentration should be clear to the mind first, before it is applied to the activity called concentration. On what should one concentrate? If one does not understand that and simply tries to concentrate meaninglessly, it will not lead to success. The processes of concentration, the methodology of meditation, the purpose for which the mind is directed in concentration, the problems that one may have to face in the practice of concentration, all these have to be understood beforehand. This understanding is naturally superior, because it precedes the very activity called concentration.

Sanatkumara gives the entire list of Vedas, sciences, arts, etc., mastered by Narada and enumerated in Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter, and says that all this is a kind of understanding. Narada has applied his thought to the analysis of these objects and has grasped the implications in a clarified manner. So he has understood very well all that he has learnt. The capacity of the analytic intelligence always precedes the activity of the mind in the form of

concentration or application of thought. All things, the five elements, every branch of learning, gods and human beings, animals and birds, virtue and non-virtue, truth and untruth, good and bad, the pleasurable and the non-pleasurable and whatnot, everything conceivable in life assumes a meaning on account of one's understanding that is attached to it. The meaning that we discover in life is nothing but the understanding of that particular aspect of life. If understanding is absent, meaning also is absent. When meaning is absent, nothing is present. The long list given in this *mantra* contains every blessed thing in the world. All these things have meaning only because of the understanding that is behind it. The determining factor of the value of any object whatsoever is the understanding behind it, the knowledge that is behind it. The capacity of the knowing subject is superior to the character of the object. Therefore, understanding should be the object of one's meditation.

2. *Sa yo vijnanam brahmety-upaste, vijnanavato vai sa lokan jnanavato'bhisidhyati, yavad-vijnanasya gatam tatrasya yatha kamcaro bhavati, yo vijnanam brahmety-upaste, asti bhagavah, vijnanad-bhuya iti, vijnanad vava bhuyao'stiti, tan-me, bhagavan, bravitv-iti.*

To the extent of the reach of our understanding, to that extent we enjoy life. The power that we exert in life, personally or socially or any other way, is due to the extent of our knowledge. A person with knowledge or understanding is powerful. All know this very well. One's power depends proportionately on the depth or extent of

one's understanding—*vijnana.* So, this is far superior to all other principles mentioned earlier. This is beautiful, but there is something more than understanding? Narada is inquisitive to know what is above all that he has understood up to this time.

Section 8

Strength

1. *Balam vava vijnanad-bhuyah api ha satam vijnanavatam eko balavan akampayate, sa yada bali bhavati, athotthata bhavati uttisthan paricarita bhavati, paricaran upasatta bhavati, upasidan drasta bhavati, srota bhavati, manta bhavati, boddha bhavati, karta bhavati, vijnata bhavati, balena vai prthivi tisthati, balenantariksam, balena dyauh, balena parvatah, balena devamanysyah, balena pasavas-ca vayamsi ca trnavanaspatayah svapadan-akita-patanga-pipilakam, balena lokastisthati, balam upassveti.*

Now, Sanatkumara tells us something very interesting. Mere understanding in a theoretical form is of no use. It is like mere application of theory in one's own brain, inside one's own mind, without any corresponding object behind it. There is a need to connect one's understanding with the realities of life. There should not be a mere abstract contemplation without any corresponding object behind it, without any solid content inside it. The connection between one's body and one's intellectual capacity is well known. There is a need to bring about a blend of understanding with the bodily conditions. We know very well that

understanding should have a proper content. It should not be mere theory. Sage Sanatkumara says that strength is superior to understanding.

By strength he means a very general form of a blend of the functions of the mind with the functions of the body. When the body and mind come together, there is an energy of a superior character. Suppose a person has only a strong mind, but no healthy body. He will not be able to exercise his thoughts effectively. A weak body which is emaciated, sickly, about to die, may not be able to put into action its thoughts in the manner required. Also, a mere healthy and hefty body alone will not do. It requires a strong and firm mind to animate it and to give it a value. *Bala,* strength, is the union of the power of the psyche with the power of the body, the union of consciousness with its object. Strength or power is superior to everything mentioned earlier. A person who is strong can defeat a hundred people who have mere understanding without strength, says the Upanishad.

The commentators of this passage tell us that this has a specific reference to the condition of a disciple in relation to the Guru whom he serves. Well, that is only one aspect of the interpretation. A student is supposed to serve his master or Guru. This capacity to serve the Guru would not be there if the student's body is emaciated and rickety, being starved without food, even though he has got great power of thought and understanding. The service of the Guru would only be practicable if the strength of the body is coupled with understanding. Then he can stand up—*utthata bhavati.* Then he can serve—*paricarita bhavati*. Then he can approach— *upasatta bhavati.* Then he can see

what is the ideal before him in his student life, in the vicinity of the Guru—*drashta bhavati.* Then he can listen to what the Guru says—*srota bhavati.* Then he can understand what the Guru says—*manta bhavati.* Then he can understand and apply it in his own meditation—*boddha bhavati.* Then he can do exactly as the Guru says—*karta bhavati.* Then, of course, his understanding becomes complete—*vijnata bhavati.*

Now again the master says that strength seems to be the reason behind the stability of the elements, as also the earth, the atmosphere and the heavens. Everything that is in this world maintains its position on account of strength that is present in it. So strength, a general term indicating power, is not merely physical strength but a power which is the outcome of a combination of knowledge with its content. Gods and men become successful on account of the strength that they possess. This is also the cause of the success of the animals, birds, etc. The whole world rests on the basis of strength of some sort or the other—*balena lokas-tisthati.* 'Whatever you think, that you become', is an adage. If one contemplates that one is a very weak person, a finite fellow, capable of nothing, unwanted by people, thrown out of society, very poor, then naturally, due to this self-hypnotism that one imposes upon oneself, one may turn out to be all that. But, if one contemplates on the capacity that is within, hidden within, the potentiality that is in one, then that strength, which need not be imported from outside but which has only to be generated from within by a proper coordination of the principles of one's own personality, will certainly materialise. Strength is an

automatic outcome of a proper functioning by way of coordination of all the limbs of the personality, psychic as well as physical. Such strength is the heritage of all. Therefore one should meditate on strength.

2. *Sa yo balam brahmety-uaste, yavad-balasya gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yo balam brahmety-upaste, asti, bhagavan balad-bhuya iti, balad-vava bhuyostiti, tan-me, bhagavan bratitv-iti.*

To the extent of our power or strength, we are perfect. This is a simple truth. "Is there something greater than strength?" asks Narada. Sanatkumara replies, "Yes." "Then kindly instruct me on that which is greater than strength." This is the further request of Narada.

SECTION 9

Food

1. *Annam vava balad-bhuyah, tasmed-yady-api dasa ratrirna'sniyat yadi u ha jivet, atha va adrasta'srota'manta 'boddha'karta'vijnata bhavati, atha'nnasyayai drasta bhavati, srota bhavati, manta bhavati, boddha bhavati, karta bhavati, vijnata bhavati, annam upassveti.*

That which gives strength is superior to strength, and it is metaphorically called here *anna,* food. It is a peculiar term occurring many times in the Upanishad. Etymologically, *anna* is of course, food. Anything that feeds the other is called food. It may be rice, barley, wheat, or anything else. It can be even some psychological substance. Something that is contributory to the sustenance of something else is called food. Sometimes matter in its

generality also is called food in the language of the Upanishads. In that sense also, we can interpret the word *anna* mentioned here. There is a combination of the objective and the subjective in the generation of any kind of power. It is not one aspect alone that works when there is success in life. Success is due to the application of some strength of action. But this strength does not come up to the surface of one's consciousness or experience unless the two aspects, the objective and the subjective combine together. It is not true that the object alone works independently. It is also not true that the subject alone works independently. There is a mutual blend of these two aspects. Without air we cannot breathe, but without lungs also we cannot breathe. This is a gross example of how the subjective and the objective both have to combine to ensure success. This is the case with everything that happens in social life. We live by coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding. This, the coming together of the forces of nature in their co-relativity with the powers that are in the individual, applies to every realm of being and every type of action. This is the source of strength. When we are harmonious with nature and the forces of nature are in harmony with us, we become strong persons. This feeding principle, the element that is responsible for the generation of strength, is food, and that is what is called *anna* here, which is superior to understanding.

Now, Sanatkumara gives a well-known example to show how food is the source of strength. If one does not eat for ten days, what happens? Of course he will live. He will continue to be a human being, but he cannot see, hear,

think or understand. This is because he has not eaten food for ten days. The objective principle has been taken away and only subjective principle is alive in him. *Prana* is there, but food has gone. One immediately feels elated the moment food comes near one.

As we go further and further in this chapter, we will find it is more and more difficult to understand the intention of the Upanishad. The instructions are very cryptic in their language. Even the Sanskrit language that is used is very archaic, giving way to various types of interpretations. But, the general background of the thought of the teacher here seems to be that there is necessity to rise gradually from the lower level to the higher level of comprehension. Here, by comprehension we mean the capacity of consciousness to include within its being, not merely within its thought or understanding, the reality that is outside. The more the extent of the reality outside that gets absorbed into our own being, the more is the power we can exercise over that realm of reality. This is a point, of course, that will be clear to anyone. Power is not merely imposed on us by any kind of ordinance or mandate. It is an outcome that arises automatically on account of the identity of our Being with that extent of reality with which we have become one.

2. *Sa yo'nnam brahmety-upaste, annavato vai sa lokan panavato'bhisidhyati. Yavad-annasya gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yo'nnam brahmety-upaste, asti, bhagavah, annad-bhuya iti, annad vava bhuyo'stiti, tanme, bhagavan, bravitv-iti.*

So, the point that is driven into the mind of Narada by the teacher is that to become strong and powerful is to have this aspect of strength as the object of his meditation because, to the extent of the application of this kind of power, one will be successful and one will be free in that particular realm of one's contemplation. "Still," says Sanatkumara, "there is something more than that." And that is water which is superior to food, as mentioned here. The intention of the teacher here is to show to us that food is not merely the food that we eat, but it is the entire material content of the universe. The whole of the earth element is represented by the word 'food'. That is why he says that water principle is superior to the food principle. Everything that is solid has ultimately come out of liquid. The whole earth in its solid form has come out of a liquid condition. Not only this particular earth, but also everything that is material in content, everything that is solid in nature, anywhere in the whole astronomical universe, was originally in a liquid condition. The liquid was, once upon a time, in a hot gaseous condition, and so on and so forth. There are subtler and subtler causes and precedents behind the grosser expressions thereof.

"O, Narada, this thing called food, which I say is superior to everything that I have mentioned up to this time, is the element of matter, the entire objective universe in its solid form, and superior to it is the water principle," says Sanatkumara. The identification of the water principle with the ultimate reality of things is a common way of explaining the nature of the origin of things in the sacred scriptures. Sanatkumara says that originally it was all water,

though it need not necessarily mean that the original waters were the liquid that we see in this world. And perhaps there was some sort of undifferentiated state of things and it is towards that concept that the mind of Narada is being taken now, by being told that superior to solid is liquid, superior to the earth is water.

SECTION 10

Water

1. *Apo vava annad-bhuyasyah, tasmad-yada suvrstir-na bhavati, vyadhiyante pranah, annam kaniyo bhavisyatiti, atha yada suvrstir-bhavati, anandinah prana bhavati, annum bahu bhavisyatiti, apa evema murtah yeyam prthivi, yad-antarikasam, yad-dyauh, yat parvatah, yad-deva-manusyah, yat pasavas-ca vayamsi ca trna-vanaspatayah svapadany-akita-patanga-pipilikam, apah evema murtah apah upassveti.*
2. *Sa yo'po brahmetyupaste apnoti sarvan-kaman triptiman bhavati yavadapam gatam tatrasya yathakamacaro bhavati yo'po brahmetyupaste asti bhagavo'dbhyo bhuya iti, adbhyo vava bhuyo'asti iti, tanme bhagavan bravetviti.*

Life would become impossible if the liquid principle were not present. If there is no rain, there will be no food. The earth will be parched and it will no longer be fertile. The capacity of the earth to produce foodstuff would be nil, if there is not to be any rain. The coordination of the liquid element with the solid element is, therefore, necessary to produce that element called food. People will start weeping

and crying if there is no rain and it is all drought. Living beings feel distressed on account of the absence of foodstuff caused by the absence of rain. They say, "There is no food, it is all dry." When there is rainfall, people and animals, the plant and vegetable kingdom, the whole of nature becomes luxurious and joyful. Whatever has been mentioned earlier under 'food' is once again repeated here by saying that everything is dependent on the element of water like food, for sustenance, inasmuch as the former is the cause of the latter. All beings live with food and water.

Now, this is evidently a subtler form of meditation that the master is prescribing. It is not necessarily a meditation on the ocean or the rivers or the water that we see in the world, but on a subtler element that is prior to the manifestation of the solid matter which is physically not visible. We must be able to conceive of the subtler principle behind the earth principle. We must be able to contemplate on the subtle principle existing prior to everything that is solid and material in its contents. It means to say that we are now gradually rising from the physical level to the conceptual and psychological level of meditation. Next comes meditation on a still subtler concept, the concept of fire, which is dealt with in the next section.

SECTION 11

Heat

Subtler principles are always superior to the grosser ones, because they are more pervasive in character. Hence, if water is superior to the earth principle, fire is superior to the water principle.

1. *Tejo vava adbhyo bhuyah, tasmad-va etad-vayum agra-hyakasam abhitapati, tad-ahuh, nisocati, nitapati, varsisyati va iti, taja eva tat purvam darsayitva'tha'pah srjate. tat-etad urdhvabhis-ca tirascibhis-ca vidyudhih ahradas-caranti; tasmadahuh vidyotate, stanayati, varsisyati va iti, teja eva tat purvam darsayitvatha'pah srjate, teja upassveti.*
2. *Sa yastejo brahhmetyupaste tajasvi vai sa tajasvato lokanbhasvato'pahata tamaskan abhisidhyati yavat tejaso gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yastejo brahmetyupaste'sti bhagavah tejaso bhuya iti, tajaso vava bhuyo'iti tanme bhagavan bravitviti.*

"O Narada," says the great master Sanatkumara, "the fire element is superior to the water element which again is superior to all that has been said before, viz., name, speech, mind, will, memory, contemplation, understanding, strength and food." Therefore it is that heat, which is the function of fire, can dry up air and create such an atmosphere of warmth in the whole space or sky that you will feel that air itself is not present. In the atmosphere fire can intensify its function, so much so that the working of air can appear to cease altogether. Then people say, "Oh, it is very hot, extremely hot, intolerably hot." They say, "It is going to rain." When it becomes very hot, we infer that perhaps it is going to rain. So, water comes after heat. First there is an intense burning in the air, and then water comes. So is the case with every other circumstance of intense heat. Whether it is outward or inward, there is the production of the water principle on account of the

intensity of the heat principle. Then we will have, in the atmosphere, as a result of this heating up of the space and the air, lightning and thunderbolts from every direction. We begin to hear rumbling sounds from various quarters of the heavens, indicating that it is about to rain, all of which is the work of the heating function of fire. Then it falls in the form of rain. So prior to the principle of water in all its functions, is fire. In other words, fire, having manifested itself first, it expresses itself as water thereafter. Having recognised the superiority of fire as the cause of water and therefore subtler than water, one must regard the fire principle as the Absolute, for the purpose of meditation.

"So is the case with air and space. Superior to the fire principle is the air principle and higher than that also is space which contains everything within itself. All the elements can finally be reduced to space. During the *pralaya,* the dissolution of the universe at the end, the whole world is supposed to get absorbed into space. Only *akasa* exists. Earth gets dissolved in water, water gets dried up by fire, fire gets extinguished by air, and air is absorbed into space. So, finally, space is the ultimate visible reality, most comprehensive, very expansive, inclusive of everything, almost resembling omnipresence, which one should now take as the object of one's meditation."

SECTION 12

Ether

1. *Akaso vava tejaso bhuyan akase vai surya-candrama-sav-ubhau vidyun-naksatrany-agnih, akasenahvayati, akasena srnoti, akasena pratisrnoti,*

akase ramate, akase na ramate, akase jayate,
akasam abhijayate, akasam upassveti.

The importance of space cannot be appreciated unless space exists. It is the primary element that is necessary for the existence of anyone. Everything comes from space as an effect. Sun and moon, stars and lightning and whatnot, everything is in the atmosphere on account of the presence of space. We hear things on account of space. Echoes are produced on account of space. Our pleasures and pains also are due to the presence of space. There would be no objects at all, if there were no space. And if there are no objects, there would be no reaction from our side in respect of the objects. Then, there would be no experience at all, either of pleasure or of pain. So, enjoyment of every kind, and pleasure and satisfaction of every kind, are due to the spatial distinction among things. When there is sorrow, or even if there is absence of pleasure, it is due to the presence of space only. The peculiar location of the objects of sense in respect of the experiencing subject is the cause of the pleasure or the pain of the subject which is due to the intervening element, namely space. From space it is that everything comes. Things are born on account of the existence of space. There would be no production of any kind without space being present. An effect cannot be produced from a cause unless there is spatial distinction between the two. Even the trees and plants rise up from the earth and grow on account of the presence of space—*akase jayate, akasam abhijayate.* So we know what *akasa* or space is. The more we speak about it, the less should it be a type of definition of it. It is so important. It is perhaps the last

conceivable object available to us in this world. Beyond that nothing is possible for the mind to think. That is the highest physical object available.

"So, O Narada, now you take this *akasa* as the object of meditation, which is to be meditated upon as the Absolute, beyond which nothing is. The unbounded space, the unlimited expanse of sky, the *akasa* is now the object of your meditation," says Sanatkumara.

2. *Sa ya akasam brahmety-upaste, akasavato vai sa lokan prakasavato'sambadhan urugayavato'bhisidhyati, yavad akasasya gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, ya akasam brahmety-upaste, asti, bhagavah, akasad-bhuya iti, akasad-vava bhuyo'stiti, tanme, bhagavan bravitv-iti.*

If we can expand our mind to the extent of space in meditation, to that extent will be our freedom, success and power in this world. Glorious would be the capacity of that person who can meditate in this manner. Luminosity would be the object of his meditation, as space is luminous due to the presence of the sun. This person who meditates on space will be illumined by the consciousness present therein. Unlimited would be the possession of this person, as space itself is unlimited, which is the object of his meditation. And unlimited would be his achievement who so meditates. As long as there is space, so long is his success. To the extent of the presence of space, to that extent is his freedom. As far is space, so far is his freedom also. So, he will have unlimited freedom on account of this meditation on the unlimited space.

Narada says: “Well, this is a grand thing, of course. I cannot think anything more than space. I wish to know whether space is the ultimate reality. Or, is there anything beyond space and greater than space?” “There is something beyond space. There is something without which even space cannot be conceived. Why, for that matter, it cannot even exist without that. Space would be meaningless if that something which is superior to it does not exist,” replies Sanatkumara. “So there is something higher than space! What is that? Please instruct me, O great master,” says Narada.

SECTION 13

Memory

1. *Smaro vava akasad-bhuyah, tasmad-yady-api bahava asiran-nasmarantah, naiva te kamcana srnuyuh, na manviran, na vijaniran, yada vava te smareyuh atha srnuyuh atha manviran, atha vijaniran, smarena vai putran vijanati, smarena pasun, smaram upasisveti.*

Here, *smara* is a peculiar term which has been interpreted as the power of consciousness which is recognised as self-existence. Our consciousness of our own existence is prior to the operation of our consciousness of the recognition of space outside us. We must exist first, if space is to be there. So our consciousness of self-existence is prior to the determining factor of the consciousness of this vast expanse that we call space. So, *smara* does not merely mean a kind of memory which is the common meaning of the term. It is something superior to it. This self-existence

which we feel as identical with our own consciousness, which is what is meant by the word *smara,* is no doubt superior to space. If we ourselves are not there, there is no question of space being there. *Smara* is therefore surely greater than *akasa—smaro vava akasad-bhuyah.* If any person is there who has lost consciousness of his or her own existence, there is no question of space, no question of hearing or thinking, and no question of understanding. No function of any kind worthwhile will be possible, if there is no self-consciousness. If we are not aware of our own existence, what is the good of thinking about space or fire or anything? So, our self-consciousness, the self-consciousness of everyone, is superior to space, and it is that which determines the character of space. Wherever there is the manifestation of this self-consciousness, the presence of I-hood, there arises every kind of knowledge. There is thinking, there is understanding, there is hearing, and there desire operates in ever so many ways. All our activity in life, whatever be the nature of that activity, is an offshoot of consciousness of our own existence. Minus that, the whole world is naught.

2. *Sa yah smaram brahmety-upaste, yavat smarasya gatam, tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yah smaram brahmety-upaste, asti, bhagavah, smarad-bhuya iti, smarad vava bhuyo'stiti; tan-me, bhagavan, bravitv-iti.*

This itself is a very superior type of meditation where you regard self-consciousness as the object of meditation. Now, we are slowly turning from the objective to the subjective side. We have to rise further up yet, to still higher

levels which are dealt with in the sections that follow in this chapter. A person who meditates in this manner on the supreme self-consciousness prior to the perception of every kind of object, of even space itself, such a person is superior to that extent, and he has freedom to the extent of the realm of self-consciousness.

This is a startling turning point in the process of meditation. Generally, we take all objects of meditation as being outside us and located in space. We never for a moment imagine that objects have something to do with our own self-existence. The relationship between the consciousness of objects and the objects of consciousness escapes the notice of consciousness, so that we always take it for granted that objects are independent, existing outside, as though hanging in space, unconnected with other things, including one's own self. This is not true. That objects are suspended in space independently, independent of even the consciousness of their existence, is not true. They have some connection. A correlativity of being is manifested by all objects, and their nature, their character, their reaction is entirely in relation to the nature, the location and the character of the subject perceiving or experiencing them.

This is a higher knowledge which is not available to the ordinary layman who always mistakes the objects for independent things outside, and depends on them, hangs on them, as if they are his support entirely, not knowing that he himself is the contributory factor to their very existence and operation. So, to come to the inside from the outside, to the subjective from the objective, is a great

achievement indeed, which is not easily possible for ordinary people.

Now at this stage, there is sudden shift of emphasis from the external to the internal when Sanatkumara says that self-consciousness is superior to everything that he has told Narada up to this time, including space itself, which means to say the whole world of externality.

"But is there something superior to this *smara,* self-existence, and if so, may I know about it?" asks Narada. "Yes, there is something more than this also. This self-existence of yours of which you are conscious is not the ultimate reality. It is also an effect of something superior to it," is the reply of the great master Sanatkumara. "What is that? Kindly condescend to instruct me about it," prays Narada.

SECTION 14

Hope

1. *Asa vava smarad-bhuyasi, aseddho vai smaro mantran adhite karmani kurute, putrams-ca pasums-cecchate, imam ca lokam amum cecchate, asam upassveti.*

That peculiar thing called *smara,* the self-awareness or self-existence mentioned in the preceding section, is not complete in itself. Its very existence is dependent upon an urge that is present prior to it. We live on account of a kind of hope in our life. We do not live on account of our present experiences, merely. There is something within us which keeps us tied to this self-consciousness. And that is the desire for betterment of our life in the future, here

mentioned in this section of the Upanishad as *asa,* hope or aspiration. It is aspiration for self-transcendence.

Our very existence is valuable only on account of the tendency present in self-consciousness to transcend itself into higher modes of being. We are happy in this world merely because of the hope that we will be happy tomorrow, not because we are happy today. This desire is not visible outside. It is not a direct experience, but it is invisibly working within us. Our desire to exist is a peculiar character in us. We cannot logically argue out the reason behind our desire to exist. It is a supra-logical mystery.

The desire or hope to exist, which is actually what Sanatkumara meant by saying *asa,* is not a mere desire to exist as a body. People do not want to die. They want to continue their existence as long as possible. They pray for long life, but they do not understand what is actually meant by long life. It is not a desire to persist in this physical body. We are unconsciously asking for something whose nature is not clear to our own minds. We are asking for a self-transcendent existence. It is not an existence in this limited personality of ours. Who would like to be in this particular body only for a long time? Which part of our life would we like to perpetuate? Is it old age, young age, or childhood? We cannot say that any particular part of our life is to be perpetuated. There is a confusion in the mind when we ask for long life. But, the hidden intention in our mind behind this asking or desiring for long life is that we want to perpetuate the essentiality of our existence. Now this existence is not what we call bodily existence. Though we mistakenly identify our existence with the body, there is a

subtle urge within us to exceed or go beyond the limitations of our bodily existence, which is the reason why we ask for more and more things, accumulate more and more objects, and externally expand the magnitude of our being. And that is also why we ask for longevity. We want to be perpetuated in time and expanded in space. This is our desire. We have only two desires,—to expand ourselves in space, and to perpetuate ourselves in time. So this is what we are asking for in all our activities. We want to possess more and more things, as much as possible—nay the entire space! We want to expand our personality into spatial domination, and also for as long a time as possible—not tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, but endlessly. So, there is a desire for infinity and eternity that is present in us, of which we are not conscious. We foolishly interpret it as desire to exist in this body. This aspiration is *asa*. Thus, for a betterment in our life, aspiration towards self-transcendence comes even prior to self-existence.

Therefore, Sanatkumara here says to Narada: "*Asa* must be your object of meditation, not merely your limited self-existence. There is something which is implied in your consciousness of self-existence. That implication should become the content of your consciousness, and therefore, the object of your meditation."

2. *Sa ya brahmetyupaste asayasya sarve kamah samrdhyantyamogha hasyasiso bhavanti yavad-asaya gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati ya asam brahmetyupaste'sti bhagavah asaya bhuya iti asaya vava bhuyo'sti iti tanme bhagavan bravitviti.*

Our aspirations shall be fulfilled. No desire can go unfulfilled. If our aspiration is for a high thing, that also shall come. So we should leave off our lower aspirations and rise beyond the limits of bodily existence, and reach up to the higher implications of this self-existence which we are. To that extent will be our success and our freedom.

"This is very great and grand. Is there something more than this?" asks Narada. Endlessly Narada goes on asking questions, and limitlessly answers are being given. "There is something greater than this aspiration for self-transcendence, and that is the principle of life," replies Sanatkumara. "Then kindly instruct me on that principle of life," says Narada.

SECTION 15

Life

1. *Prano vava asaya bhuyan, yatha va ara nabhau samarpitah, evam asmin prane sarvam samarpitam, pranah pranena yati, pranah pranam dadati, pranaya dadati, prano ha pita, prano mata, prano bhrata, pranah svasa, prana acaryah, prano brahmanah.*

Nobody can understand what life is. We utter the word 'life' many times, but we cannot explain what it means. It is not what we do daily that is called life. Though we generally identify life with our activity, it is a mistake that we commit. Life is something inscrutable. Life is really what we are. Here, it is called *prana.* It is not the breathing process, but the life principle itself, without which there would be neither aspiration, nor self-consciousness, nor anything for

that matter. The entry of the universal into the particular is the juncture which is called life operating in our personality. It is the borderland of the infinite, where the individual expands into the expanse of the infinite and the infinite contracts itself into the finite, as it were. This particular junction is what we call life. It has the characteristics of both. Therefore, it is inscrutable. It is neither individual nor universal. We do not know what it is. We are unable to define what life is. But whatever it be, this principle of life is superior to everything else. This is what we call the reality of life. It is not merely the activity of life, the function of life, social life, or personal life or any kind of manifestation of it, but life as such. This is superior to everything. The Upanishad now tells us how inscrutable it is.

"Beyond all things, superior to all that I have told you up to this time, is life," says Sanatkumara. As spokes are fixed to the nave of a wheel, so is everything fixed to the principle of life. Whatever there is in this world, anything worthwhile, meaningful, that is nothing but *prana,* life. Minus life, everything is meaningless. What do we mean by saying "He is my father", "She is my mother", "She is my sister", "He is my brother"? We do not know. We are not referring to the body as father, mother, sister and brother. There is something else in them and that is the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, and so on. We ourselves do not know what we are when we speak about ourselves. Our importance vanishes when the life principle is withdrawn. We are valuable only so long as we are living. If we have no life, what are we? We are nothing. What we regard

ourselves in worldly parlance, viz., the body, is not our real personality.

2. *Sa yadi pitaram va mataram va bhrataram va svasaram va acaryam va brahmanam va kimcid-bhrsam iva pratyaha, dhik tvastvity-evainam ahuh, pitrha vai tvam asi, matraha vai tvam asi, bhratrha vai tvam asi, svasrha vai tvam asi, acaryaha vai tvam asi, brahmanaha vai tvam asiti.*

Why do we say that life is superior to everything, and minus life everything is valueless? The Upanishad says that if one speaks irreverently to one's father, for instance, people would say, "How stupid this person is; he talks irreverently to his own father." Similarly, if a person speaks something harsh to his mother, to his relatives, and to revered persons, good people censure him. We revere great people, we value humanity and we respect life in this world. This is something well-known to us. "Fie upon you," say people when we talk irreverently to elderly ones or behave in a stupid manner which would not be becoming of one in a human society. And if we behave in such a way in respect of elders, they say that it is like slaying them, or injuring them. We say, "Do not hurt people." What do we mean by this? Hurting whom? Hurting people. But what is 'people'? Surely not the body. The Upanishad here implies that we are enjoined not to hurt the life in them. The life principle in a person is affected by our reaction to that person. The manifestation of life principle in the embodiment of a particular person is what is referred to as 'a person'. A person is nothing but the life in that person, not the mere shape of that person in the form of a body. So, when we say

that one has behaved in such and such a way with one's father or mother, with one's sister or brother, with this person or that person, we mean to say that one has behaved in that way with the life principle present in them, not merely with the body. But suppose the life principle has gone from the father, that revered one whom we have been worshipping. Then what happens? We simply set fire to that 'father', we throw him, we prick him with pokes in the funeral pyre. Then people do not say, "Oh, this man is burning his father." Nobody says anything like that. What happens to that father, the very same father whom we revered just a few hours before, who is just before our eyes and whom we are now setting fire to in the funeral pyre? It may be our sister, it may be our Guru, it may be anybody, it makes no difference to us. It may be an emperor whom we have been respecting so much and regarding so much, and now we throw him into the pitch and bury him in the ground, or float him in the water, or set fire to him. And everybody then says, "Very nice", "Well done". You set fire to the emperor and then say, "It is very nice"! How is it possible? Yes, it is possible, because it is a great ritual that we are performing. But when he is alive, if we do that, it is murder. It is a heinous crime. So, what is our definition of mankind or humanity or any worthwhile thing in this world? Not the body certainly. If the body was our father, we would not set fire to him in the funeral pyre, and we would not prick him with pokes as if he means nothing. Even the dearest and the nearest ones are cast aside if the life principle withdraws itself from them. So, what we love as our relatives and our dear and near ones is the life, and

not the body. But we never understand this point. We say, "Oh, my father is no more." Where has he gone? He is there in the way in which he was, but we mistook him for something else. It is the principle of life that is valuable in this world, and not anything that is manifest as name and form.

3. *Atha yady-apy-enan utkranta-pranan sulena samasam vyatisandahet naivainam bruyuh pitrhasiti, na matrhasiti, na bhratrhasiti, na svasrhasiti, na acaryahcasiti, na brahmanahasiti.*

The whole of life is nothing but this inscrutable thing which we call *prana.* This is the great reality manifesting itself in various names and forms. We mistake the names and forms for this supreme Being which is masquerading here as the objects of sense, as human beings and everything else that we see with our eyes. The supreme reality of every form of visible existence is life. It is manifested in some degree in plants, in greater degree in animals, and in still greater degree in human beings, and it has to manifest itself in still more greater degrees higher up. We have come to a point where it is very difficult to understand where exactly we are. We are in an inscrutable realm. We cannot understand still as to what we are speaking about. We think we have understood what life is, but we have not understood what it really is. It is a mystery that is operating in all names and forms. Whoever understands this mystery as the all-comprehensive Reality which is superior to all names and forms, which is infused into all names and forms, which is the Reality of even the so-called names and forms, including the name and form of

our own self, is a master of Knowledge. He is called in this Upanishad as *ativadi,* a specific term here indicating one who possesses surpassing knowledge and whose utterances are surpassingly true.

4. *Prano hy-evaitani sarvani bhavati, sa va esa evam pasyan, evam manvanah, evam vijanan atvadi bhavati, tam ced bruyuh ativadyasiti, ativady-asmiti bruyat, napahnuvita.*

The greatest knowledge is the knowledge of life, not merely the knowledge of objects of sense. Whoever sees this Reality as it is in itself, whoever can think in this manner, whoever can understand in this way, transcends all, because here the knowledge has gone beyond all objects of sense. It has comprehended them in its own Being. And, therefore, it has become one with Truth. It is not merely a pursuit of truth that we are referring to here as knowledge, but Truth itself that has become one with knowledge. A person who has such a knowledge has really comprehended Truth, and what he speaks in such a stage of knowledge is called *ativada*. This term *ativada* means transcended speech, speech which is pregnant with truth, speech which is to materialise in life as truthfulness. Whatever a person with this knowledge speaks will get materialised in life, because the truth or the reality of all things is contained in the knowledge which this person has. Therefore, speech being an expression of one's thought and knowledge, whatever one utters becomes true in this stage of experience. And if people cannot understand him and they say to him, "You are speaking something which we cannot understand." Then he must say, "Yes, I speak something which you

cannot understand, because this is a matter which is not supposed to be understood by your mind.” Here, we are not in the realm of understanding of objects of sense, but we are in the realm of Being with things. So, one who is capable of attuning himself with the Being of the objects, alone can understand what the truth of this exposition is. It is true when the Upanishad speaks like this; it speaks what one cannot understand. Neither is it intended to be understood by the layman whose mind has not been adequately transformed, because here we are being led gradually from mere sensation and perception, from mentation and understanding, to the intuition of objects, wherein the objects become one with the knowing perceiver, knowing reality—the Subject.

At this stage, Narada is unable to speak. His breath is held up, as it were. He does not know what he is hearing from this great master. This master observes the silence of the disciple who now does not say as on previous occasions, “Please let me know if something more is there.” He keeps quiet, his mouth is hushed and his mind has stopped thinking. He does not know what to speak. Seeing this, the master himself starts pursuing the subject further without being accosted by the disciple.

SECTION 16

Truth

1. *Esa tu va ativadati yah satyenativadati; so’ham, bhagavah, satyenativadaniti, satyam tv-eva vijijnasitavyam iti, satyam, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

Transcendent speech is an expression of transcendent knowledge. And transcendent knowledge is that knowledge which is identical with transcendent truth. This is the peak of experience, the peak of wisdom. Our speech should be based on the reality of Being. Only then it manifests itself as reality. Truth and knowledge are identical. Our speech becomes true, because our speech is based on the knowledge of the true. This is what Sanatkumara means when he says,—*esha tu va ativadati yah satyenativadati.* "Well, my master, then I wish I would be like that—*so'ham bhagavah satyenati vadan-iti,"* says Narada. "Please initiate me into this mystery of acquiring that knowledge which is tuned up to Reality, which is one with Being. Is it possible for me to have this knowledge?" *"Satyam tv-eva vijijnasitavyam,—*my dear Narada," says Sanatkumara. "You want a knowledge which is tuned up with reality, but you must know what reality or truth is. Unless you know what truth is, how can you try to identify your knowledge with truth, or truth with knowledge? You must have a clear conception of what I mean by 'truth'. Only then can you have an aspiration for identifying your knowledge with truth, knowing truth and speaking truth." "Then Master, I would like to know what truth is—*satyam, bhagavah vijijnasa iti.* Please tell me what is truth."

SECTION 17

Truth and Understanding

1. *Yada vai vijanati, atha satyam vadati, navijanan satyam vadati, vijananneva satyam vadati,,*

vijnanam tveva vijijnasitavyam iti, vijnanam, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.

Again we are in a vicious circle of argument, as it were. You want to know what is truth. Truth has to be known as it is, and not as it appears. There are various types of truth before us: One says, "This is true," "That is true," and "Everything is true." But is everything ultimately true? We must have a clear conception what ultimate truth is. "O Narada," says Sanatkumara, "you can speak truth only when you know what truth is; otherwise, how can you speak truth? But do you know what truth is? Truth is not what you perceive as true in this empirical world. The whole world is not true. It is not the ultimate truth. So, how can you say that anything in the world is true? Whatever you speak is not true. You must know what is really true. When one knows what truth is, then one speaks truth." Narada is instructed in this manner.

An ignoramus cannot speak truth. Knowledge of truth is, therefore, very important. We have to know knowledge itself, because it is knowledge that comprehends truth. What is knowledge and what is truth? We are here entering into the difficult subject of the ultimate principle of our very life, knowledge and truth, *jnana* and *satya.* What is truth and what is knowledge,—this must be known. Without that no one can proceed further.

SECTION 18

Thought and Understanding

1. *Yada vai manute, atha vijanati, namatva vijanati, mataiva vijanati, matistveva vijijnasitavyeti, matim, bhagavah vijijnasa iti.*

The word *mati* and similar other words used in these passages of the Upanishad carry a meaning much more deep than what appears on the surface, because we are treading upon forbidden land where the mind cannot easily reach, where things go almost beyond and above our heads. We do not know what we are speaking and what we are hearing. Such is the condition that is being explained here. Such is the state into which Narada is being initiated by Sanatkumara, the great master.

There is something higher than this knowledge or aspiration for truth. What is that? It is the tendency of one's being to move towards Reality. It is the very reason behind our aspiring for Reality. How do we know that Reality is to be known? Who put this idea into our head? We say, "I must know God," "I must search for Reality," "I must aspire for the Absolute." How did this idea arise in our mind? There is a tendency in us to move towards the Reality. This tendency is prior to our consciousness of Reality. We cannot be conscious of this urge itself, because it is prior to everything else, even becoming conscious of anything. Nobody knows what this urge is and from where it comes. *"Isvaranugrahad-eva pumsam advaita vasana,"* says the great master Dattatreya. We do not know how aspiration arises in our mind. It has not come due to our efforts,

because effort cannot be there without knowledge. But the question is, "How has this knowledge arisen?" So Bhagavan Dattatreya says that perhaps it is God's grace, or we may call it the grace of the Absolute, or the mysterious outcome of the very process of evolution which is egged on by some principle of which we have no idea and the purpose of which is far, far beyond our understanding.

"So, Narada," says Sanatkumara, "beyond and prior to all that is in you including your knowledge of reality, including your aspiration for it, behind everything, is a tendency in you to move towards it. The mind will stop thinking completely, for it does not know what to think at all if this tendency were not there. Only when this tendency, this inclination of your total being towards the Reality is there, only then can you have an aspiration for Reality, not otherwise. This is the object of your meditation now." "This is what I want. How is this possible? I want to have knowledge of this mystery that you are speaking of," says Narada.

SECTION 19

Faith

1. *Yada vai sraddadhati, atha manute, nasraddadhan manute, sraddadhad-eva manute, sraddha tveva vijijnasitavyeti, sraddham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

Sraddha, faith in the existence of Reality, and the working of this tendency of movement of one's being towards Reality are almost simultaneous. How do we know that Reality exists? That is a faith that is in our mind, introduced into us by the very tendency of Reality urging

itself forward towards its own Self-realisation. This faith is superior to thought and understanding. It is not what we call blind faith, but an irrepressible feeling in us that Reality is. It must be there. We do not have any doubt about Its being. *Mati* and *sraddha* go together. So, Narada is told here, "This *sraddha,* faith in the very existence of Reality, is somehow to be taken as prior to *mati,* the consciousness of the tendency towards Reality working through your being, when this faith is present in you. You have to differentiate ordinary faith from this superior faith that I am speaking of. It is almost a kind of realisation. Without this faith in you which is born of tremendous experience of a higher calibre, nothing else is possible." Narada says: "I want this faith to be implanted in me, O great master."

SECTION 20

Steadfastness

1. *Yada vai nististhati, atha sraddadhati, na'nististhan sraddadhati nististhanneva sraddadhati, nistha taveva vijijnasitavyeti, nistham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

When one has steadfastness in Reality, then this superior faith also comes. A person who has steadfastness becomes one with the Reality, as it were, in his psychological being. This is called *nishtha* in this section. Sanatkumara says that when there is *nishtha,* there is *sraddha,* and when there is *sraddha* there is *mati,* the tendency in one to move towards Reality.

What exactly is this steadfastness referred to in this section? It is an incapacity of the mind to contemplate

anything except Reality. If we think, we think only that; otherwise, nothing. The very function of the mind is set in tune with the nature of Reality so profoundly that we have virtually become that. This is the cause of the faith in us, and the working of the tendency in us towards Reality which we have mentioned already.

"I want to know what this *nishtha* is. O great master, kindly instruct me further," says Narada.

SECTION 21

Activity

1. *Yada vai karotyatha nististhati, nakrtva nikstisthati krtvaiva nististhati, krtis-tveva vijijnasitavyeti, krtim bhagavo vijijnasa iti.*

All this is the effect of another important factor, *kriti,* self-control, that has either been exercised by the aspirant or arisen in him automatically, whatever be the reason behind it. In other words, it is a withdrawal of consciousness from every kind of external perception. This is a superior activity that he is performing. His attunement with the nature of Reality in contemplation is due to the self-control that he has exercised in his being, which means to say that his senses have weaned themselves from their contacts with things outside, and he no longer regards the objects of sense as being outside the knowledge that he is aspiring for. So, self-control does not mean a pressure exerted upon the senses by force of will, but a spontaneous withdrawal of consciousness from its desire to externalise itself in respect of outward things on account of the superior faith, on account of this aspiration, on account of

this knowledge. The individuality in us, the *jivatva* in us, the personality in us, the subjectness that has been responsible for our perception of the objects of sense, has become null and void automatically on account of consciousness ceasing to work in terms of objects of sense. When the outside objects of sense cease to be, the subject also ceases to be. When one thing goes, its counterpart also goes. So when the world has gone, the 'you' or the 'I' also is gone. There is nothing on either side, neither on the object side nor on the subject side. This great achievement is prior to everything, transcendent to everything.

"What is this great achievement of the human personality in respect of the ultimate Absolute? Can I be enlightened a little further about this supreme achievement? How can I achieve this at all? What is this action of self-control that you are enjoining upon me as preceding to every other activity conceivable?" asks Narada.

SECTION 22

Happiness

1. *Yada vai sukham labhate'tha karoti, nasukham labdhva karoli, sukham eva labdhva karoti, sukham tveva vijijnasitavyam, iti, sukham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

"Well, O Narada, I tell you, nothing can be done unless it is propelled by happiness. Everywhere you will find happiness is the object of every kind of aspiration, activity, desire or enterprise. You will find, prior to everything conceivable, there is the presence of happiness. Everyone, irrespective of the character of one's individuality, tries to

be, to act and to conduct oneself in different ways, because of this happiness. You must know what happiness is. It is this that is the propelling force behind everything in creation," says Sanatkumara.

The whole process of creation, manifestation and dissolution, evolution and involution, the entire activity of the cosmos is an urge of happiness. It is happiness that is trying to recover its own consciousness and establish itself in its own pristine all-comprehensiveness. It is this that is called activity. It is this that is called enterprise and aspiration. It is this that is also called cosmic evolution. Happiness is at the back of everything. Happiness alone is.

Here, we have been taken gradually up to that point where it has been concluded that every effort is motivated by happiness. This is not merely a practical fact, but also a psychological truth. But the mere recognition of the presupposition of happiness behind every kind of activity does not solve the problem of happiness, its location, its whereabouts and the means of its acquisition. Normally in our workaday world, we are accustomed to think that happiness is an achievement, by means of an effort, in the direction of an object which is regarded as the location of happiness. It is strange, no doubt, that different subjects endeavouring in the direction of happiness have different objects wherein happiness is supposed to be lodged. It does not mean that one and the same object or every perceiving subject is the house or abode of the happiness of everyone. This is the irony of the whole affair. It seems to be present in every object, inasmuch as every object is the target of the approach of some subject or the other in this world, though

it is true that no particular object can attract the recognition of all subjects at the same time. This is the reason behind a doubt that can arise in the mind as to where happiness lies.

Is it in me or is it in somebody or something else? If it is in the mind of the subject merely, as it is sometimes, no doubt, opined by psychologists, then there will be no point in the mind moving towards an object of sense for the acquisition of pleasure. The very fact that the mind is not satisfied with its own self and feels an obligation to move towards something outside should be indication enough that something is lacking in the mind itself. This lacuna in the mind is the cause for the movement of the mind towards something outside, searching for that which it is not able of discovering in its own self. So, there seems to be a flaw in the doctrine that the mind alone is the source of all happiness, because this doctrine is refuted by the very activity of the mind every day, which moves towards things other than its own self, viz., the objects in the world around us.

But the other doctrine that the world is the source of happiness also seems to be refuted by a deeper analysis that no object seems to be capable of attracting the attention of everyone at the same time, nor even one and the same subject at all times. So, there seems to be some mystery behind even the assumption of the presence of happiness in the objects outside. But it must be somewhere. It cannot be neither here nor there, because the whole world of perceptional activity is a collaboration of the subject and object. And therefore, it has to be either this way or that

way. By mere empirical analysis it is difficult to find out where happiness lies, because a mathematical or arithmetical analysis of the situation will lead us merely to the analysis of the mind inside and the objects outside. There is nothing else for us to discover in this world. But, we find that we cannot discover the happiness in the mind, nor can we discover it in the object of sense.

So, the question is, where is happiness? A very stimulating answer comes to this question from the great master Sanatkumara. It is not in the mind, nor is it in the object, taken independently by themselves. Happiness cannot be bifurcated as a property of some particular finite thing in creation. If it is regarded as a property of the mind, it becomes a finite content. If it is regarded as a property of an object of sense, again it is finite in its nature. If you regard the abode of happiness as a blend of the object and the subject in a finite manner, even then the joint action of two finites cannot amount to more than the finite. Two finites coming together cannot create anything more than a finite. A little larger magnitude, physically or spatially, may be added to the joint activity of a subject and the object, but the finitude in the product of these two does not cease. Happiness cannot be regarded as finite, ultimately, because we are not satisfied with finite pleasure in this world. No one asks for limited happiness, though logically it cannot be defined as to how it can be infinite. The impulse from within which seeks for happiness is an answer to this question. It answers its own question by saying that no one is satisfied with any amount of happiness which is bounded by finitude of any kind. So it is neither in the finite object,

nor in the finite subject, merely because of the fact that the finite container cannot afford to lodge within itself that which exceeds the limit of finitude.

So Sanatkumara says, “My dear Narada, happiness is not anywhere and yet it is everywhere; it is in a completeness of Being that you can find happiness.” It is not in any kind of accumulation of particulars that happiness can be found. It is not in any aggregate of finitudes that happiness can be discovered. The finitude of a particular situation does not get obviated merely because of the aggregate of finitudes. Even millions and millions of finite objects put together do not cease to be finite in the end. The finitude which is the character of things persists even in an aggregate of finitudes. Even the whole world put together is finite. It cannot be regarded as infinite, because it is limited by space, limited by time, and limited by the very presence of inner discrepancy within its own self. So, what is there which is not finite in this world? Nothing. Then where is happiness? Not in anything that can be conceived by the mind or perceived by the senses. Happiness cannot be in anything in this world, because everything in this world is finite. Its definition, of course, defies ordinary mental cognition. It is the ‘spiritual fullness’ which philosophers call the Absolute, which the followers of religion call God, and which psychologists call the supreme Spirit. The infinite Reality that is behind all finitudes, that alone can be regarded as complete by itself, because That alone is independent of any kind of contact with the finitudes. That infinitude is the source of happiness whose reflection in some manner or other in the

finite objects of sense becomes responsible for our belief that happiness is in the objects outside.

SECTION 23

The Infinite

1. *Yo vai bhuma tat sukham, nalpe sukham asti, bhumaiva sukham, bhuma tveva vijijnasitavya iti, bhumanam, bagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

"Happiness is plenum, happiness is completeness, happiness is the totality, happiness is in the Absolute," declares the great master Sanatkumara. The term 'Bhuma' used in this Upanishad is a novel word of its own kind which cannot be easily translated. It has a pregnant significance within itself which implies absoluteness in quantity as well as in quality, an uncontaminated character, permanency of every type, immortality, infinity and eternity. All these ideas are embedded in the very concept of what the Upanishad calls 'Bhuma'. Well, we can translate it in no other way than to call it the Absolute Being. The Brahman of all the Upanishads is the same as the Bhuma mentioned here in this Chhandogya Upanishad. That alone is happiness.

If that alone is happiness, why is it that we feel happiness in objects of sense? There must be some mystery behind the search for happiness in the objects of the world, if it is true that they themselves do not contain happiness. "*Nalpe sukham asti,*—the finite things do not contain happiness," says Sanatkumara, the master. If finite objects do not contain happiness and it is only in the Infinite, then how do you explain the discovery of this happiness in the

objects of sense? If it is absolutely impossible to discover it in objects, no person will go towards any object of sense. The reason is that the presence of this Bhuma is felt in every object, in some mysterious manner. Existence as such of the object, as they say, is the reason behind the discovery of happiness in the objects which are nothing but names and forms ultimately. There is something in the objects which is capable of indicating that behind them is this reservoir of happiness. The indication is due to their creating a situation of apparent completeness when they come in contact with the mind of the subject. Wherever there is a sensation of completeness, there is happiness. This completeness may be artificially brought about. And then, there may be an apparently conceived totality, not a real one, or there may be a true one. Whatever it be, even a mere semblance of the experience of this completeness becomes the source of the experience of happiness. The union, in whatever manner that be, between the seeking subject and object sought creates in the mind that is perceiving, cognising, and searching, a sensation of having achieved its purpose. And this sensation, attended with a thought of consciousness of having achieved one's purpose, brings about a stimulation within, which is characterised by a feeling of completeness. A sensation of completeness, a feeling that something asked for has been obtained, is introduced into the mind. This feeling is capable of lasting only for a fraction of a moment, because the mind cannot be satisfied with the idea that its purpose has been fulfilled, merely because of contact with the object. It is induced into a false state of feeling, that the purpose has been served.

And this state is momentary. The mind realises that a mistake has been committed unconsciously, and it withdraws itself from this contact, hibernates itself into its own cocoon, searches for another source of happiness, and finds itself in a state of misery all in one moment. So every experience of happiness in this world is passing, fleeting, transient and momentary, of the character of a moment. It cannot last for five minutes. No one has experienced happiness for five minutes continuously because of the fact that there is an anxiety within and these anxieties are brought about by certain suspicions arising in the mind, together with the experience of this contact of itself with the object. The suspicions are brought about by the recognition that the contact is not actual union, because real union of the subject with the object is different from mere contact, be it physical or even psychological. There is a flaw in every type of union. Every coming together ends in a separation, whatever that be, either in this world or in the other world. This is the reason why there is only an apparent happiness in this world, in our coming in contact with things of the world. Even this apparent, momentary happiness is due to an awareness of the presence of this Bhuma in a flash of a moment of experience.

It is completeness of being that is the source of happiness. But where is this completeness of Being? It is not in the objects of sense, not in the union of one and two, or in the union of many. Social union is no union at all. They are coming together in a physical, psychological or social sense, no doubt, but they are not real union. Union is a real blend into a single Being. Whatever be the attempt of

subjects in their coming in contact with objects, they never become one Being. We have never seen two persons becoming one, or two things becoming one, or a society of people merging into a single personality. Such a thing has never been heard of, nor is it practicable. Until that is practicable, happiness also is not practicable.

The search for happiness in this world is a search for the will-o'-the-wisp. It is the search for phantasmagoria of the concoction of one's own mind. Not in the finite is happiness to be found—*valpe sukham asti.* The Absolute, Fullness alone is Bliss—*bhumaiva sukham.* "So I reiterate, O Narada, this is the truth. The total union of Being as such which I regard as Bhuma, that is the real Bliss. So I say once again that Bhuma, the Fullness, is Bliss. How can you enter into this Bhuma unless you know what Bhuma is? You must, therefore, know what Fullness is," says Sanatkumara.

"O great Master, please tell me what this Bhuma is. Please introduce me to this great mystery of Being that you call Bhuma. What is Bhuma? What is this Fullness? What is this completeness? If it is not to be found in the union of things in this world, where else can I find it?" asks Narada.

Section 24

The Infinite and the Finite

1. *Yatra nanyat pasyati nanyac-chrnoti nanyad-vijanati sa bhuma, atha yatranyat pasyati anyac-chrnoti anyadvijanati tad-alpam; yo vai bhuma tad-amrtam, atha yadalpam tan-martyam, sa, bhagavah, kasmin pratisthita iti, sve mahimni, yadi va na mahimniti.*

"Do you want to know what Completeness is? And do you want to know what finitude is? Here is the definition," says Sanatkumara. "Where one sees nothing except one's own Self, where one hears nothing except one's own Self, where one understands nothing except one's own Self, that is Bhuma, the Absolute; and where one sees something outside oneself, where one hears something outside oneself, where one understands or thinks something outside oneself, that is the finite."

So here is the whole matter clinched in a single sentence, describing what is Fullness and what is not-fullness. What is immortal is the Bhuma alone, and what you call mortal or perishable, is the finite. "O great master, where is the Bhuma situated? Which place?" asks Narada. "You ask me where it is situated, this great eternal All-Presence! It is situated in Its own Glory. Well, or perhaps, It has no situation at all," replies the master. "It cannot be that It is located in something else, that It is dependent on something else, that It has something else as its support, just as we have some support or the other in this world. How can the All-Being be supported by something else! It is the support of all things. What is this strange question that you are putting to me? Its support is Its own Self. Rather I say It has no support, for It is the support of all. What do you mean by support? What is the meaning of this question, 'Where is it located, where is it situated?' You have got some wrong notion in your mind, Narada, because you are thinking in terms of objects in this world."

2. *Go-asvam iha mahmety-acaksate, hasti-hiranyam dasa-bharyam, ksetrany-ayatananiti, naham evam*

bravimi bravimiti hovacanyo hy-anyasmin pratisthita iti.

People in this world regard cattle and horses as greatness itself. A man is very rich, well-supported and sustained if he has plenty of cattle, plenty of horses, elephants, and gold, if he has plenty of servants, attendants, palatial buildings, vast property, and a beautiful house to live in. This is called a well-to-do life in this world. This is called good support; this is called sustenance. Not so is this Bhuma supported. It does not require any of these things for Its support. Its being is not dependent on anything that is of the nature of support in this world.

"I am not speaking of the Absolute in the sense that you have in your mind, thinking that it requires something else to lean upon," says the master. The relativity of things is the support of things in this world. Everything hangs on something else in this world. I hang on you, and you hang on me. That is how we live in this world. But, no such hanging is possible in the Bhuma. It is self-sufficient, self-supported, self-complete and self-existent. It is not any relative being. It is the absolute Being. While everything in this world is relative in the sense that everything is supported by something else, everything is defined by something else, everything is determined by the existence of something else, Bhuma does not exist in this sense. It is absolutely independent. Therefore, It is non-relative in every sense of the term. It is everywhere. It is difficult to say where It is, because the question 'where' implies the existence of space.

"O my dear Narada, your question itself is unfounded and unwarranted. Why do you ask where It is, as if It is in space? But if you want me to tell you where It is, I say It is in space, It is in every nook and corner, in every pinpoint of space. There is no space where It is not; there is no space which It does not occupy."

SECTION 25

The Ego and the Self

1. *Sa evadhastat, sa uparistat, sa pascat, sa purastat, sa daksinatah, sa uttaraah, sa evedam sarvam iti, athato' hamkaradesa eva, aham evadhastat, aham uparistat, aham pascat, aham purastat, aham daksinatah, aham uttaratah, aham evedam sarvam iti.*

"If you go down below, you will find It. If you go above, you will find It there. If you go behind, you will find It there, also. If you go in front of you, It is there. To the right of you, It is there. To the left of you, It is there. O Narada, what can I tell you about It? The whole cosmos is filled by It. It is not merely feeling that It is everything. It is everything. All these things that you see with your eyes are nothing but configurations of Its own Being. Are you satisfied?"

Now, a doubt may arise in the minds of people. Grammatically the word 'It' implies third person. Is It then a third person other than me? No, it is the subject only that is doubting thus. The subject that imagines that It is perhaps a third person, is also included in It. The thinking subject also is that very thing which we have referred to as

the Bhuma. It is not merely the transcendental. Just as we can say, “It is all things”, “It is here”, “It is there”, “It is everywhere”, even so, the subject also can be said to be everywhere—“I am here”, “I am there”, and “I am everywhere.”

But here again a doubt may arise: what is this ‘I’? Is it the individual ‘I’, the ego? Is it the empirical subject, asserting itself as the all? No, the Atman in the subject is that which is identical with the Bhuma that is cosmic. So, a distinction is to be drawn between the individual subject and the subjectness universally present behind the individualities. That is called the Atman. So, it is not the *jiva* that is identified with the Bhuma here, but the Atman, even as they say the space within a vessel is identical with the space in the universe outside. There is no distinction between a pot space or the space in a tumbler and the space outside, because the distinctions that we create are imaginary. Really no two things exist as inner space and outer space. So is this identity of the Atman with Bhuma. If there is any kind of doubt that it may be the *ahamkara,* the individual subject that is implied here, in order to remove that the teacher says:

2. *Athata atmadesa eva atmaivadhastat, atmoparistat, atma pascat, atma purestat, atma daksinatah, atmottaratah, atmaivedam sarvam iti. Sa va esa evam pasyan-nevam manvana evam vijanannatma ratir-atmakrida atma-mithuna atmanandah, sa svarad-bhavati tasya lokesu kamacaro bhavati, atha ye’nyathato viduh, anyarajanaste ksayya-loka bhavanti. Tesam sarvesu lokesu-akamacaro bhavati.*

"The universal is also the Atman in all things. It is the essential subject of everything. So, that which is cosmically present as the total object is also the total subject. It is the subject and object at one stroke, in a universal sense. This is what I mean by Bhuma. Here only is happiness, nowhere else. What else can be said? Whatever is required, all that has been said. O Narada, what more can I tell you? One who has such realisation or knowledge as this that I have mentioned to you just now,—one who can see things in this manner, think in this manner, or understand in this manner as I have expounded just now,—such a person is the most happy person conceivable. Such a person is delighted within his own Self, such a person plays with his own Self, such a person enjoys his own Self, such a person is rooted in the bliss of his own Self."

Now, what is this 'own Self'? It is not my self. It is not your self. It is not the bodily self. It is not the individual self. It is the Universal Being, the All-Being, the All-Presence, Bhuma. This is what is called the Self. And when we say the person enjoys himself, it is the Absolute that is enjoying Itself. That is what we are speaking about, and not Mr. So-and-so, not this person or that person enjoying. This is a very great distinction that we have to draw when we try to understand these passages of a highly mystical character. A person of this nature endowed with this knowledge, acquiring this realisation, becomes a master of himself, which means to say a master of all things. Self-mastery is mastery of the universe. He becomes Self-emperor, Self-king, ruling over the Self. To rule over the Self is to rule over everything that has the Self within itself, and this Self is

everywhere. So he rules over everything everywhere. It is cosmic rulership that is intended by the word 'self-kingship',—*Atma-svarajya. Atma-svarajya* mentioned here is Universal Lordship. It is the experience of God-Being. Such is the experience that is bestowed upon this blessed Soul who has entered into the bosom of this knowledge, this realisation, this experience. This person can enter into every realm at any moment. Just as you can move from one room to another room of your house without any kind of impediment or obstruction, as you are the free master of your own house, so does this soul acquiring this knowledge enter into every plane of existence. Every realm of being becomes a free passage to this great one who has acquired this knowledge. He becomes possessed of cosmic freedom.

But what about those people who do not have this knowledge? They are subjected by other people and controlled by them. They are limited from all sides. It is they that take rebirth by pressure of circumstances. Whoever imagines that there are things outside one's own self, he is naturally controlled by those things which are outside him. If one is living in a world of externalities, those externals shall compel one to subjugation to their own laws and mandates. This cannot be escaped. They are not Self-kings, which means to say that kings are outside them and they themselves are not kings. They are subjects and not kings. Their worlds are perishable. Whatever they get in this world is mere dust and ashes. They only reap sorrow in this world. They cannot get happiness, because they live in a world of finitude. They cannot have free entry into other worlds. They are limited to the circle of their own

experience. These are the *jivas*, the bound souls who are bereft of this great knowledge we are speaking of.

SECTION 26

The Primacy of Self

1. *Tasya ha va etasyaivam pasyatah, evam manvanasya, evam vijanata atmatah pranah, atmata asa, atmatah smarah, atmata akasah, atmatas-tejah, atmata apah, atmata avirbhava-tirobhavau atmato'nnam atmato balam, atmato vijnanam, atmato dhyanam, atmatas-cittam, atmatah samkalpah, atmato manah, atmato vak, atmato nama, atmato mantrah, atmatah karmani, atmata evedam sarvam iti.*

To such a blessed one everything comes, rises from his own Self. He need not go hither and thither in search of things, because he has this knowledge. He does not have to go to things, but things go to him. The ocean does not go to the river, the river goes to the ocean. Whoever is endowed with this great experience, this knowledge, the possession of this wisdom, for such a person everything that has been mentioned in the gradation of the categories earlier, right from 'name' onwards up to the point we are discussing now, arises automatically from his own Self, because the supreme cause contains within itself everything else mentioned as its own effects. All these worlds, space, time and the five elements, all created beings, everything that we have been studying up to this time in the various stages of development of thought,—all this need not be approached separately or individually for satisfaction. They all come

simultaneously rising from his own Self, the true Self, the Bhuma, because that Self being all, contains all, and therefore, all things come to that person who ceases to be an individual person any more. He is only a lodgment, apparently looking like a person in this world. He is a *Jivanmukta,* as they call him. He is really a repository of the absoluteness that he has realised. Everything comes to him, everything flows from his own being, because he himself is the all.

2. *Tad-esa slokah:*
   na pasyo mrtyum pasyati na rogam nota
   duhkhatam; sarvam ha pasyah pasyati sarvam
   apnoti sarvasah; iti.

sa ekadha bhavati, tridha bhavati, pancadha saptadha navadha caiva punas-caikadasah smrtah, satam ca dasa caikas-ca sahasrani ca vimsatih ahara-suddhau sattva-suddhih, sattva-suddhau dhruva smritih, smrtilambhe sarva-granthinam vipra-moksah; tasmai mrdita-kasayaya tamuasah pararm darsayati bhagavan sanatkumarah; tam skanda ity-acaksate, tam skanda ity-acaksate.

The chapter is here concluded. The Bhuma-Vidya has been expounded. One who has this realisation is free from every kind of affliction—physical, mental or otherwise. To him there is no death, no transmigration and no sorrow. No grief, no *adhibhautika, adhyatmika, adhidaivika* sorrow can afflict this person. Becoming all, this person sees the all. Having known this, he knows the all, because he is the all. Everything is attained at one stroke, not in succession as we hear of in this world. In every manner everything comes to him. Things come to us only in certain ways, not in every

way. All things do not come to us at the same time. Certain things alone come to us, not all things. And even those certain things come to us at some times, not all times. And even at those times, they come not in every way but only in a certain manner. But in his case, everything comes at all times, in every way. This is the great result that follows from this realisation.

In every manner of manifestation, in every possible pattern of existence or being, things flow into this person, because this person is inclusive of every pattern of being, of every place of existence, of every realm conceivable. That is the meaning of *sarvam apnoti sarvasah.* The Upanishad reiterates this very same meaning by saying that he becomes all,—one, two, three, four, a thousandfold, a millionfold,—whatever you can think of. All things are contained in this single experience, is the meaning which is made out by this exclamation of the Upanishad: "It is onefold, it is twofold, it is threefold, it is fivefold, it is sevenfold, it is ninefold, it is hundredfold, it is thousandfold, it is millionfold, as wide as this creation itself." Such is the glory of this creation. The sun has one ray or seven rays or a million rays.

Interpreters of the Upanishad try to find a specific intention behind these numbers. They say that It is onefold as the one, non-dual Being. It is threefold, being *adhyatmika, adhibhautika* and *adhidaivika* or the three elements fire, water and earth. It is fivefold as the senses can catch, and sevenfold as the constituents of the body. It is ninefold as the five sense-organs and the four subdivisions of the mind. It is elevenfold as the ten organs and the mind.

It is hundred and tenfold, and a thousand and twentyfold, when It includes many other categories. All these things are comprehended within this single Being. The manifoldness mentioned here is merely a categorising of this singleness of Being through the channels of perception and experience in various manifestations,—human, celestial, subhuman, etc. As is the nature of the incarnation, so is the nature of perception and experience. So all these categories are consumed by this single Being. What you call the inanimate world or the vegetable kingdom or the animal world, what you call the human level and superior worlds of celestials right up to *Brahma-loka,*—all these are comprehended within this single Reality in which there are no different levels of Being. It has no inanimate or animate category there. It has no distinction of subject and object, and It is the seer as well as the seen. This knowledge comes if your effort is properly directed. It does not suddenly drop from the sky, like a fruit that falls from the branch of a tree. Great effort is needed to acquire this knowledge.

Aharasuddhau sattvasuddhih—Purity of thought is a consequence of purity of diet. Here, some people are of the opinion that it means that we must take pure food—*sattvik* diet. But other thinkers opine that if you think wrongly and see evil things, even if you eat good pure food as cow's milk, fruits, etc., it is not going to help you. So Sankaracharya particularly is of the opinion that it is an exhortation to receive pure things through every sense-organ including the mind. We must see purity, hear purity, touch purity, think purity, and sense purity. And what is purity? Purity is that which is compatible with the nature of the Absolute.

This alone is purity. What is that which is compatible with the nature of the Absolute and what is not? Whenever we cognise a thing, perceive a thing, that thing should, from the point of view of our cognition or perception, be capable of being harmonised with the Absolute. We should not be incompatible with nature. That thing alone is purity, and when that purity arises in the mind, there will be that capacity of concentration of mind which retains the consciousness of the Bhuma. That is the perpetual retention of memory, the *smriti* which this *mantra* mentions. We can never forget the Being, the Absolute in our own Being.

Then all *granthis*, the knots of the heart, get broken The knots of the heart are *avidya, kama* and *karma*—ignorance, desireful movement of the mind, and activity towards the fulfilment of desire. Sometimes they are called *brahma-granthi, vishnu-granthi* and *rudra-granthi*, all meaning one and the same thing, viz., the ties of the mind, the psychological knots by which we are tethered to earthly experience. They break immediately, and we enter into the ocean of Being.

Thus, Bhagavan Sanatkumara, the great master, initiates Narada who is free from all impurity of every kind, a fit disciple to be instructed by an exceptionally great master, into this great mystery of the Supreme Being, and takes the disciple across the ocean of sorrow. "This Sanatkumara," says the Upanishad, "is called Skanda—*tam skanda ityacaksate*." Sanatkumara is called Skanda, because he has crossed or leaped over the phenomenal existence, which is one interpretation of the word 'Skanda'. There is also a story that Sanatkumara himself was born as Skanda

or Kartikeya, the second son of Lord Siva, for the purpose of fulfilling a great purpose of the gods, as we read from the Puranas and epics. Whatever it be, we take the great master either as that divinity that took birth as Skanda in the next incarnation, or one who has crossed the ocean of sorrow, jumped into the Absolute across the phenomenality of life. To that divine person is our obeisance. He is Skanda,—he has reached the Absolute, and he takes us to the Absolute.

Chapter Four

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE OF THE SELF

SECTION 1

The Universal Self Within the Heart and in the World

1. *Harih Om. Atha yad-idam asmin brahma-pure daharam pundarikam vesma, daharo'smin antarakasah, tasmin yad-antah, tad-anvestavyam, tad-vava vijijnasitavyam.*

We now commence the eighth and the last chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad. In our own self, in the deepest recess of our own heart, there is a great secret. This is the subject of this chapter. We carry within our own self a great mystery. No one can be a greater mystery than our own Self. Everything else is capable of definition and understanding, but one's own Self is the greatest enigma in the whole world. Everything can be investigated into, but not one's own Self, because it is a great secret by itself. It is not an open box where we can pick out whatever we like merely by sense perception. It is a tremendous mystery which hides, within its own bosom, the miracles of the whole creation. Such is the heart of man which is the pivot of every kind of activity, whether internal or external.

The great teacher of this section of the Upanishad tells us that there is the city of Brahman, the Absolute, in our own Self. A very small lotus-like abode exists in our own heart, and in this little abode, there is a little space which shines by its own light. What is there in that space? To know this is our duty. It is our duty to understand what is inside this little space in our own heart, which is inside the

city of Brahman, which is very small and looks like a lotus. This is the city of God. Some people may ask, "What is inside this? What is this great secret you are speaking about?" The answer is being given in the following *mantras*.

2. *Tam ced-bruyuh, yad-idam asmin brahma-pure daharam pundarikam vesma, daharo'smin antarakasah, kim tadatra vidyate yad-anvestayam, yad-vava vijijnasitavyam iti.*
3. *Sa bruyat, yavan va ayam akasah, tavan eso'ntarhrdaya akasah ubhe asmin dyava-prthivi antar-eva samahite, ubhav-agnis'ca vayus-ca surya-candramasav-ubhau, vidyun-naksatrani yac-casyehasti yac-ca nasti sarvam tadasmin samahitam iti.*

"You ask me what is inside this little space. I tell you that everything is inside here," says the teacher. It is like a speck of sunlight. Though it may look like a speck, it contains constitutionally everything that is in the orb of the sun. Similarly, that which is in this little space can magnify itself to any extent. It is an emblem of the cosmic secret. Whatever is the extent of this vast space that is outside, that is the extent of this little space in our own heart also. So, one should not be under the impression that it is little in an arithmetical sense. It is little in a different sense altogether. It is not physically small. It is not a little handful of space. It is really as expansive and as extensive as this universal ether that we see outside. The whole of the heaven and the whole earth can be found inside this little space. The principles of the five elements,—earth, water, fire, air and ether—and whatever you see outside, is all present here in this little

ether. The sun and the moon and also the stars can be seen inside this very heart of ours. They have a corresponding emissary planted in our own heart. We need not look up to the sun outside. He is inside our heart and he shines in the same way as he is seen outside in outer space. Even the lightning and the thunder that are seen outside are taking place inside our heart. Everything that happens in any manner, even the littlest thing, takes place here inside. Whatever we see in the outside world and whatever we cannot see in the outside world—all those things are inside our heart.

Well, the heart inside seems to be a greater mystery than the outer world. Whatever we cannot see in the whole world also is here, says the Upanishad. Why is it that we cannot see everything in the outer world, and why should everything be inside our own heart? Because our heart, which we call the selfhood of our being, is the true representative of the ultimate Reality. The outer world cannot be regarded as such a representative. The externality that is characteristic of the outer world prevents it from revealing everything that is in the Supreme Being, whereas one of the aspects of the Supreme Being, which is subjectivity, is present in us. Externality is not a characteristic of God. Ultimately, He is subjectivity, and that aspect is present in us, although the outer aspects are not. Hence, while the incapacity of probing into the subjectivity of the external universe prevents us from knowing everything in the universe, there is a possibility of diving into our own Self and knowing all things at one stroke.

As a matter of fact, all investigation in the field spiritual is internal and not external, because when a thing is externalised it is divested of the divine content. It thereby gets partially abstracted. What we call the outer world is only that aspect of Reality which can be comprehended by the senses. Whatever the senses are incapable of grasping cannot be contained in the external world. Only a little bit of the total value of the ultimate truth can be taken out by the vessels of the senses, more than that they cannot contain. What is sensed by the senses in the form of sensation is not the whole reality. They can take up only what they can contain and what they are able to cognise. It is the five elemental features of the external manifestation that the senses can present to us in experience. But, there are other aspects which they cannot contain within themselves and about which they cannot, therefore, give any kind of information.

This is the secret, as the Upanishad puts it. This heart is a great secret, and by an introversion of Consciousness into its depths, it would be possible to plumb the mysteries of the whole cosmos. The reason is that the tentacles of all planes of being are centred in one's heart. It is as though this heart is the centre of a universal circle. The radii of this circle converge into this little centre of Consciousness which we vaguely call the subject of perception.

It has been explained in the earlier chapters, especially in the third chapter, that the Absolute is universal in its nature. It is not merely an individual subject. But, this is a very hard thing for the mind to comprehend. One's mind can never know what universality is and, therefore, any

amount of instruction given to it from this point of view would naturally go over one's head. We are told that the present chapter is especially intended for those who are unable to grasp the implications of the just-preceding chapter, which is concerned more with the universal aspect of the Absolute. But when this chapter confines itself to the heart of the individual, it does not limit itself to the body of the individual. For, the heart which we are speaking of is not the physical heart. It is not your heart or my heart, not that which is in this bodily encasement. It is a symbol used for the centre of pure subjectivity in us and, therefore, the heart means the consciousness which is apparently located within the walls of the body, but which can never be restrained or limited on account of its super-physical nature. Physical encasements cannot limit it in any manner whatsoever. We will gradually be taken to the point where the 'little thing' that we speak of at present as being in our own heart is found to the same as the 'universal thing' that has been discussed in the third chapter. The two are one. Whatever is there is also here.

4. *Tam ced-bruyuh, asmimsced-idam brahma-pure sarvam, samahitam sarvani ca bhutani sarve ca kamah yadaitaj-jara vapnoti pradhvamsate va, kim tato'tisisyata iti.*

The teacher tells that inside the heart is all the mystery of things. Every object of one's desire is inside one's heart. It is not outside. Whatever one longs for is contained within oneself. A question is raised here from the point of view of a student: "When the body gets old and is finally overcome by death, what happens to this heart that you are

speaking of? Does it also disappear with death? How can that which is capable of destruction by death contain the mysteries of creation?" This doubt is immediately removed in the following *mantras.*

5. *Sa bruyat; nasya jarayaitaj-jiryati, na vadhenasya hanyate. Etat satyam brahma-puram asmin kamah samahitah. Esa atmapahatapapma vijaro vimrtyur-visoko vijighatso'pipasah, satya-kamah, satya-samkalpah. Yatha hy-eveha praja anvavisanti yathanusasanam, yam yam antam abhikama bhavanti yam janapadam, yam ksetra-bhagam, tam tam evopajivanti.*

This heart that the Upanishad is speaking of does not get old when the body gets old. It is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. It is the city of the gods. How can it be destroyed? It can never be destroyed, for it is not a city of brick and mortar. It is not like a city that is built by man. It is the eternal abode of the eternal objective of eternal aspiration. The objects of one's desire or aspiration are contained here and they shall be available for experience, the moment they are invoked in the proper manner. This little thing that we call the heart is nothing that is mortal or physical. It is the Atman. What we call the Atman is the same as what we refer to here as the heart. It is free from every kind of affliction or sorrow or limitation. It is unaging, for it has no age. It is the timeless Being and, therefore, it has no destruction. It sees no death. It sees no sorrow. It is self-existent by its own pristine magnificence. It has no hunger and It has no thirst. It asks for nothing, for It is self-sufficient in Its own Self. Whatever It wills is

capable of being materialised at one stroke. This is the will that is pure in character, uncontaminated by any kind of falsehood which is of the nature of externality. The nearer we go to this 'heart', the more is the strength of our will and the more is our capacity to manifest it and materialise it in our practical life.

The more the limited will of the individual human being is drawn out from this centre of the heart, the more does it get diluted by contamination with the evil of externality. The more it gets contaminated by association with the externals, the more is the impossibility of achieving success in this world, and the greater is the difficulty of contacting the objects of one's desires.

But the more we go deeper and inward into our own Self, the greater is strength of our will and the greater the possibility of achieving success in obtaining anything that we want. This is the meaning of *satyakama, satya samkalpa.* When our consciousness, will and thought-functions are rooted in Truth, they should materialise themselves at once in the forms they are expected.

The case of such persons whose will is not so rooted in truth is like the case of those who are subject to domination by other rulers. They are like subjects in this world who are ruled by kings and administrative chiefs. The subjects are completely under the control of the chiefs or rulers, because the country or kingdom belongs to them. The people in a country are under the thumb of the rulers. Whatever is the ordinance passed by these rulers, that these subjects obey. Whatever people wish to have, they have to obtain from these rulers, not otherwise. Whatever little piece of land is

allotted to them by the administrative chiefs, whatever is granted to them in any manner whatsoever, on that alone they have to depend. This means that the sustenance of these people who are subject to domination by others is dependent on factors external to themselves. The actions such people perform in this world for the purpose of living a happy life are conditioned by the existence of external factors. They are not unconditioned. Therefore, there is a limit for the achievements of these people. Whenever a need is felt for being subjected to others' rule, the actions one performs naturally will be subjected to the conditions laid down by those external rulers. So, they are not really independent. Their will also cannot exceed the limit of the ordinances of these rulers. This is the case with every person in this world in every respect. This analogy given here is only to explain the predicament of people in general. The rulers or the administrators or the chiefs mentioned here are factors other than one's own Self. They may be natural forces, or they may be gods in the heavens, or they may be any blessed thing in the whole creation compelling you to act according to a particular law or rule. This fate befalls one on account of one's will and action being restricted by the operation of laws which are outside.

This sort of action brings about a reaction. And this we call the law of *karma* which is binding in its nature, causing reincarnation and the resultant suffering. All this is due to the impact of laws operating outside oneself and compelling one to obey their dictates. So, the more is one's dependence on external factors, the greater is the nemesis of action. And the greater the independence one has, the

less is this nemesis or reaction produced by actions. Hence, every action performed by every individual is capable of producing only transient results. Our actions in this world cannot give us immortal happiness. We cannot have absolute freedom by anything that we perform in this world, because this world is conditioned and it works on conditioned laws. It conditions the individual who is a content of itself, causing everything to be limited from inside as well as from outside. It is something like the freedom that we give to cows or cattle in general when we tether them to a peg by a rope. They have some freedom but it is limited to the extent of the length of the rope. Likewise, there seems to be some kind of freedom, given to us on account of the adjustment that we perform between ourselves and the external atmosphere. But to that extent of the adjustment alone are we free. Beyond that we are not. Thus, we are introduced to the fact of the limitation of human nature in those who are divested of this knowledge of the Atman and who consider themselves merely biological units and not spiritual centres.

6. *Tad yatheha karma-jito lokah ksiyate, evam evamutra punya-jito lokah ksiyate. Tad-ya ihatmanam ananuvidya vrajnty-etams-ca satyan kaman, tesam sarvesu lokesu-akamacaro bhavati. Atha ya ihatmanam anuvidya vrajnaty-etams-ca satyan kaman, tesam sarvesu lokesu kamacaro bhavati.*

Our bank balance is not to be infinite. We know it very well. Our salary also is not to be unending. It will have an end one day. The more we work, the more salary we get.

But our salary depends upon the work that we do, the extent of the work that we do, the length of time for which we perform our work, etc. Anything that we achieve in any manner whatsoever visibly in this world is subject to limitation. Our actions bring about conditions which give us conditioned happiness. We cannot be always happy merely because we live in this world. The conditions under which we are subjected by the laws of this world, the laws of action and reaction and many other factors, compel us to have only limited happiness, and even that we will find to be an apparent happiness if only we conduct a true investigation into its character.

As is the case with actions performed which produce transient results in this world, so is the case with those actions, even virtuous ones which are supposed to produce beneficial results in the other world. They too are transient in their character. Just as secular actions produce limited results in the secular world, so do religious acts and virtuous deeds produce limited results in the other world. Even if we perform a wealth of virtuous acts in this world and after death reach shining regions of paradise, they will yield only limited experiences, because, after all, all these experiences are action-born. Whether an action is virtuous or vicious is not the question here. The question is whether it is an action or not. Because it is an action, naturally it is conditioned by the factors which rule over every type of action. Therefore, limited results alone follow all actions. Nothing is unlimited if it is produced by action. Sorrows are limited and pleasures too are limited here. Pleasures of the other worlds also are limited. So, everything that we get

is limited ultimately. Nothing unending can result from actions which have an end one day or the other.

We cannot have freedom absolute, because of the absence of the knowledge of the Atman. Even those people who are well-to-do in this world, who are regarded as great by people in this world, but who do not know the nature of this Atman, go like animals. Just as animals die, those people also die, and the fate of those people ultimately is like that of the animals, for however great their category be, they are bereft of true Knowledge. The real nature of oneself is the nature of one's own Atman. The point made out here is that if we cannot understand our own Self, how can we understand anybody else? We have not known the Reality that is inside us. Then how can we know what is really outside in the world? Those people who are ignorant enough not to know even their own internal nature go to worlds which produce limited results, and they have absolutely no freedom. Just as we have no freedom in this world, because there is a ruling law operating external to us, so is the case with people who go to the other worlds. There, too, they have no freedom. If some law operates here, in this world, some other law operates in the other worlds also. Just as we are subjected to rules here, we will be subjected to rules in the other worlds also. Everywhere we will be subjects and not kings or masters. Merely because we have a little bit of freedom to enjoy the objects of senses, it does not mean that we are completely free. It is like the freedom of cattle to eat grass and chew cud. It is not real freedom. This is the fate of those who do not know the

truth. The reason is simple. They cannot exercise their will to the furthermost limit on account of these limitations.

But the blessedness of people who know what this Atman is, is grand indeed. Those who depart from this world having realised what the Atman is, their jurisdiction is infinite. They are not limited by laws outside. They are themselves lawmakers. Their will is the universal law. There is a unity between their will and the law that works outside. In the case of ordinary individuals, the difficulty arises on account of the conflict between external law and internal law. Why are we limited in this world? Because our will does not coincide with the will of the universe. We have got a way of thinking which is not necessarily in consonance with the law of the whole universe. The will of the individual is not the will of the Creator. That is the reason why there is bondage. But the more one goes into the depths of one's Being, the more does one approximate the identity of one's self with the law that is operating outside. The question of outside and inside will not appear when there is harmony of the two. We talk of inside and outside as long as we think independently through a physical body, as long as we are individual subjects thinking of external objects. But when we are knowers of the Atman, as the Upanishad puts it, we also know what the ultimate Reality is. Then the law of the outside world becomes the law of the inside world. The law of the Atman is the law of the universe. Therefore, there is absolute freedom for those who are knowers of this great secret. Whatever they will, it expresses itself in experience at once. There is no gap of time between the manifestation of their will and its

materialisation. It is not that they think something today and it materialises tomorrow. It instantaneously manifests itself. This is the case of the blessed souls who have known the Atman.

The objects of desire appear to be outside us, which is the reason why we take time to realise our objectives. There is a distance in space and in time between ourselves as centres of volition and the objects outside. Therefore, naturally there is delay in time. The time taken by us in the realisation of our objectives is due to the existence of space which looks very vast outside and which looks very puny inside. The other reason is that we have no control over the objects of our desires. Our desires are not truth-filled, not *satyakamas.* They are artificially projected by conditions which are not entirely in consonance with the law of truth. Therefore, it is difficult for us to fulfil all our desires. The desire becomes difficult of fulfilment on account of its dissonance or disharmony with the nature of truth. Truth alone triumphs, as we know, and nothing else will triumph in this world. And if the will or the desire of a person is filled with untruth, which means to say it has certain characteristics that cannot be corroborated by the nature of truth, to that extent it shall not succeed. But to the extent it is in harmony with the nature of truth, to that extent it succeeds. The externality of the object is, therefore, one of the impediments to the manifestation of the object in the fulfilment of a desire. The whole point seems to be that the object outside is as much an individual with its own status as the willing subject. Therefore, there is no easy access to the location of the object by the subject. The object is not

subservient to the subject. It is not a vassal or a subordinate of the subject in any manner whatsoever. Any one person is not a subordinate of another person. Both are on par with each other. So is the case with every object in this world. Just as I am the subject, the other so-called object is the subject from its own standpoint. So, to will in such a manner as to control the object, and convert it into a subordinate of one's self, is not an easy affair. As long as we are content to remain physical bodies, individual persons, isolated physically from physical objects outside under the impression they are absolutely disconnected from us, as long as we are conditioned by these false notions in us, so long we cannot fulfil our desires. But, the fulfilment immediately comes once we realise our affinity with the objects.

It is not true, as the mind falsely thinks, that the objects are disconnected from the subjects. The more the intensity of the feeling of identity with one's body, the greater is the difficulty in the achievement of any objective in this world, because the objectives get more and more cut off from oneself. The more the intensity of the feeling of one's body and isolation from others, the more is one's feeling of segregation from other things and the greater is the difficulty in one's achieving anything in this world. The more we cut off connections from other things, the more are we intensifying our personality consciousness. The more we think we are independent bodily, the more is the difficulty for us in this world, because the more is the reaction produced by other persons and things in this world in a similar manner. The greater the affirmation of

our body consciousness, the greater is our segregation from other beings in this world, and greater is the reaction produced by them who will also assert themselves in a similar manner to us. If I am different from you, then likewise you are different from me. So, here is the psychology behind the secret of unfulfilment of desires by those who are intensely body-conscious and selfish in their nature, egoistic in their motives and incapable of knowing the inward connections between themselves and other things of this world.

The knowledge of the Atman that is referred to here is nothing but the knowledge of the deepest secret of the connection of the subject with the object. If that is known, the externality of the object falls away, the difference between the subject and the object ceases, and there results a true union of the two. That is called the true fulfilment of all desires. This, therefore, is the great truth proclaimed by the Upanishadic master. He who knows the Atman gets all desires fulfilled at once and the other people who know not the Atman are subject to the rule of law. The whole world is ours if we are able to establish an inward contact with the world. But nothing will be ours, we will be forlorn, deserted wanderers in this world, if we think that we are mere bodies unconnected with others.

Now comes a beautiful series of proclamations or exclamations made by the Upanishad in the following section, telling us what the power of the will of a person who has Self-realisation is, and what capacity that person has got. Nothing is impossible for that person.

SECTION 2

Different Higher Worlds

1. *Sa yadi pitr-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya pitarah samuttisthanti, tena pitr-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*

If he wants to see someone, say a forefather in the other world, he can see him at once. There is no such thing as 'other world' for that person who has realised the Atman. Just as this world is not, the other world also is not. There is only one thing, which is commensurate with his own Being. We can see our own fingers even though they are a little distant from our eyes, say two feet away. This distance does not prevent us from seeing them. Distance is ruled out here on account of the identity of the object with our own Self. The forefathers in the other heavens also can be seen at once the moment his will projects itself in that fashion.

2. *Atha yadi matr-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya matarah samuttisthanti, tena matr-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
3. *Atha yadi bhratr-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya bhratarah samuttisthanti, tena bhratr-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
4. *Atha yadi svsr-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya svasarah samuttisthanti, tena svasr-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
5. *Atha yadi sakhi-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya sakhayah samuttisthanti, tena sakhi-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*

6. *Atha yadi gandha-malya-loka-kamo bhavati samkalpad-evasya gandhamalye samuttisthatah, tena gandhamalya-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
7. *Atha yadi anna-pana-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasyanna-pane samuttisthatah, tena anna-papa-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
8. *Atha yadi gita-vadita-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya gita vadite samuttisthatah, tena gita-vadita-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
9. *Atha yadi stri-loka-kamo bhavati, samkalpad-evasya striyah samuttisthanti, tena stri-lokena sampanno mahiyate.*
10. *Yam yam antam abhikamo bhavati, yam kamam kama-yate, so'sya samkalpad-eva samuttishati, tena sampanno mahiyate.*

It is a long list which I need not translate. It means to say that everything that we can think of,—relatives, friends, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, good things, great things, pleasant things, objects of desire present in this world or in the other world—whatever they be, they do not take time to manifest themselves if the will is exercised in the proper manner. What is the proper manner? The will has to be in tune with the law of the Atman. This is the only condition. It must be a universal wish coming from every corner of the world enfolding within itself every object. Then there will be an instantaneous manifestation of all things to the satisfaction of the universal will of this Self-realised sage. Whatever be his wish, that shall take place, but his wish will not contradict universality, because the wish itself is universal.

All these desires in our hearts are really distorted forms of the manifestation of consciousness in some way or the other. It is the great universal Being seeking expression in various types of experiences in this world. All thoughts, all desires, all aspirations, whatever be the functions of the psyche, are movements of consciousness towards Self-realisation. It is the search of the Self for the Self in the world outside. But there is some defect in the movement of consciousness when it gets lodged in the body of an individual and imagines that it is somehow or other limited to the extent of that body alone. This feeling, falsely introduced somehow or other in respect of the association of consciousness with the body, is called *anrita,* falsehood. When falsehood gets mixed up with truth, which means to say, the body idea and the externality idea get mixed up with the true Consciousness that we are, then it becomes difficult for us to achieve anything in this world. The more we free ourselves from the notion of the consciousness getting identified with the body and externality, the more is our capacity to exert our will in the proper way and fulfil our desires.

SECTION 3

The Space Within the Heart

The capacity to fulfil a desire is actually the power of the vision to find out where the object of desire is and what connection the object has with one's own self. The lack of this vision in respect of the object of desire is the impediment which acts as an obstacle to the fulfilment of the desire. Desires are really the visions of consciousness

which act in different ways, in different levels of experience. When, due to the locking up of consciousness in a particular level of experience, it cannot visualise what is outside it or beyond it, then it becomes difficult for it to come in contact with the objects of its desires.

1. *Ta ime satyah kamah anrtapidhanah, tesam satyanam satam anrtam apidhanam, yo yo hy-asyetah praiti, na tam iha darsanaya labhate.*

The words *satya* and *anrita* literally mean truth and untruth. Truth is the capacity to visualise things as they are in themselves, and untruth is that which obstructs this vision. Things as they are in themselves are not vitally disconnected from one another. There is really no distance between one object and another object. If distance does not exist, the difficulty in contacting objects should not arise. But the distance does exist for a particular type of consciousness which has limited itself and which therefore thinks that it is different from that which the whole universe is capable of in its completeness. This is the reason why those who are not in this physical world cannot be seen by people living in this physical world, and why the former cannot be contacted by the latter. There is no communicating medium between this world of experience and the other world of experience. There is, really speaking, no such thing as this world and the other world. There are not many worlds, there is only one vast continuum of experience. The distinction of this world from the next world and many other worlds arises on account of the varying densities of consciousness which appear to cause different levels of experience.

We cannot actually establish a conscious communication between dream and waking, for instance, notwithstanding the fact that there is no real gulf physically speaking between waking and dream experiences. There is absolutely no distinction, if you seriously investigate into the structure of dream as well as of waking. Yet they appear to be so different that one who is awake cannot have entry into the dream world, nor can one who is dreaming have entry into the waking world. It is the distinction of the capacities of certain levels of consciousness which is the reason behind the distinctions made between the two different worlds, viz., the dream and the waking worlds. Worlds are fields of experiences and experiences vary in their intensities corresponding to the particular level in which one finds oneself at any time. Corresponding to the correlative objective world in which one finds oneself, there is the possibility or impossibility of knowing what is beyond the ken of the physical senses. People who are dead are not really dead. They are in some other level of experience. They are in a different realm, in a different density of consciousness. Those in that particular density cannot contact those in another density.

Now, another startling remark is made here by the Upanishad when it says that all these people who have passed on from this world, those who are born and those who are not yet born, those who have come and those who have gone to other worlds are in our own hearts. They are not outside somewhere. We carry them in our own hearts, in the ether of our consciousness. It has been said earlier that whatever is outside is also inside. So whatever is in the

various levels, in the various *lokas* or realms of being, in the so-called external universe, is present in our own hearts. They can be invoked from within our own selves by the strength of the mind. This cannot be done ordinarily on account of the untruth of bodily attachment and externality-consciousness interfering with the truth of the universality of experience. The great obstacle to the perception of the things that are there in the whole universe is the locking up of consciousness in a particular body. It is imprisoned in a particular individuality, *jivatva,* and it cannot think more than what is finite and limited. This is the untruth referred to here. It is something that is not really there, but which one experiences by habit and by repeated application of oneself to that type of experience which falsely goes by the name of reality to the exclusion of every other possibility of experience. Thus, those people who have passed away cannot be seen, and those who are not born also cannot be seen. But those who are not born also still exist somewhere in the world. We say this with reference to a distance that appears to exist between ourselves and those unborn ones, as if they are outside us. The question of outsideness just does not arise in a world of a continuum of consciousness. But still it appears to interfere with our experience on account of body consciousness, individuality and egoism.

2. *Atha ye casyeha jiva ye ca preta yac-canyad-icchan na labhate, sarvam tad atra gatva vindate, atra hi asyaite satyah kamah anrtapidhanah, tad-yathapi hiranya-nidhim nihitam aksetrajna uparyupari sancaranto na vindeyuh, evam evemah sarvah praja*

ahar ahar gacchantya etam brahmalokam na vivdanti, anrtena hi pratyudhah.

If only one were to dive into the ocean of one's own heart, one would see there everything that one cannot even dream of in one's mind. All those who have died since ages, millions and millions of years ago, and all those who have not yet come into being at all but are to manifest themselves now or in the ages to come,—all these forms are capable of being perceived in one's own heart. But in this world this is not experienced, because this is a world of physicality and intense bodily awareness. On account of this, everything seems to be scattered hither and thither, as if one thing has no connection with the other thing, while really in the heart of all things can be discovered the treasure of the whole universe wherein you find the entire population of the cosmos right from the time of creation till the time of dissolution.

An example is given here to illustrate this. It is something like people walking over a treasure and not knowing that there is a treasure underground, says the Upanishad. Someone might have buried some treasure-trove under the earth and many people may be walking over it without knowing that a big treasure is underneath. Similar is the case with us who carry treasures in our own hearts. In our own selves, all these are contained. But we cannot have entry into them on account of the absence of the awareness of the fact that they are there. The consciousness of this fact is repelled by the very existence of interest in something else. We stumble upon the treasure every day. We fall upon Truth and contact everything,

everywhere, in all our experiences—past, present and future—throughout the various incarnations we take, but we cannot know that we are coming in contact with it, just as subtle, etheric waves and light waves may be passing through this very hall in which we are seated but we cannot know that they are passing. These waves are of high frequency. Neither that which is too low in frequency nor that which is very high can be comprehended by us who can experience only a particular range of frequency. Thus it is that we ourselves do not know what we contain in ourselves.

It is impossible to know this great treasure by a projection of the mind outwardly, because it is seated within the heart of things. It is not external. As a matter of fact, it is the search we make externally that is the obstacle in knowing that which is within one's own self. Things do not exist as externals. They are not exclusive. In fact, everything is inclusive. The knowledge of this internal connection is denied by the very desire to see things externally. Thus we see that the contradiction that arises on account of the desire which projects itself through the senses in respect of externality of things prevents the knowledge of things as they really are.

3. *Sa va esa atma hrdi, tasyaitad-eva niruktam hrdy-ayam iti, tasmad-hrdayam, ahar ahar va evam-vit svargam lokam eti.*

There is a peculiar etymological derivation of the meaning of the word *hridaya,* which usually means heart. The Upanishads are very fond of these kinds of etymological extractions of meanings for certain words

giving the significance of the words. As I said, *hridaya* means heart. It is a Sanskrit word and the Upanishad now explains why the heart is called *hridaya.* "Here inside is He." This means to say, Truth is inside you; it is the abode of that which *is*, and therefore, it is called *hridaya.* One who knows that one's heart is the abode of Truth attains to the highest heavens in experience. Our day-to-day experiences are not merely empirical or secular, as we normally dub them. There are no secular experiences or worldly experiences or physical experiences. They are only names that we give to the one experience of Truth. And these names are given only for the purpose of convenience in language to distinguish one type from another in our empirical dealings. In fact they are all one mass of experience, like a single body of an ocean of waters with different sizes and forms of waves. In every experience we can plumb into the depths of Truth, even as in every wave we can have water. With every perception we perceive That only. In every kind of cognition there is a cognition of Reality. But unfortunately we mistake the Being for objects on account of the habit of the mind to define things in different ways.

4. *Atha ya esa samprasado'smac-charirat samutthaya param jyotir-upasampadya svena rupenabhinispadyate, esa atmeti hovaca, etadamrtam abhayam, etad-brahmeti, tasya ha va etasya brahmano nama satyam iti.*

When a person rises above body consciousness, there is a serenity of experience. It is as if he is free from a drug effect into which he has entered and to which he has been

subjected for long. Consciousness gets muddled on account of the influence of an external toxic matter due to which there is no proper thinking and understanding. As this toxic effect subsides, there arises serenity, tranquility and composure of experience. He feels as if something new has come into his life. He wakes up as if there is a new daylight before him. This is *samprasada,* the composure of consciousness which arises on account of the freedom of consciousness from bodily shackles. The moment this consciousness is freed from bodily attachment it rises upwards, as it were, like a flame of brilliance. It is the supreme luminosity. It is light by its own right, a light that does not require another light to illumine itself, *paramjyoti.* When one attains to this supreme luminosity which is one's own real nature, one is established in one's self. Then one is in one's true form. As we wake up from dream and recognise our true nature as being different from what we felt ourselves to be in dream, so does one recover one's real nature and shake off the old notions of connections with bodies, one differing from the other. One state of consciousness imagines that it is an animal, another state of consciousness imagines that it is a human being, and so on and so forth. Various states identify themselves with various forms of experience which are called the bodies. They may be animals or human beings or celestials. Whatever they are, those forms are cast off on account of Consciousness extracting itself from those shackles and it stands by itself as a liberated being. This is the Atman. The real Atman is that which is free from entanglement in any kind of form. This is the Immortal. It is the

disidentification with the body that is the cause of immortality. This is what we call Brahman, the Absolute, ultimately the universal nature of this Atman. What we call Truth, about which we have been speaking up to this time, is Brahman Itself. We may call It the Atman or Brahman. It makes no difference. This is the Truth, because That alone is, That which is in all the three periods of time. That knows no distinction of the passage of time. That is perpetually what It is without distinction either in space or in time. That is the Atman, and that is what we call Brahman.

5. *Tani ha va etani triny-akasarani satiyam iti, tad-yat sattad-amrtam, atha yat-ti tan-martyam, atha yad-yam tenobhe yacchati yad-anenobhe yacchati tasmad-yam, ahar-ahar-va evam vit svargam lokam eti.*

Again here we have the usual symbolic meaning of the word *satyam,* etymologically derived. What is *satyam? Satyam* is, says the Upanishad, a word which can be dissected into three syllables—*sa, ti,* and *yam* —and from the point of view of this interpretation of the Upanishad, *sa,* the first letter, stands for what is immortal; the second one *ti* stands for what is mortal, and *yam,* the third one, is that which holds the two together. The mortal and the immortal are both comprehended in something which is different from the mortal and the immortal, which means to say that as the *antaryamin,* or the indwelling principle, this Supreme Reality, holds together in itself both the subject and the object, consciousness and matter. What we call immortal is consciousness and what we call mortal is matter. Both these are held together in this Universal Being.

It is something transcendent to our concepts of mortality and immortality. Even the word 'immortal' is relative in its significance, because to say that something is immortal or deathless would be to relate it to a phenomenon called mortal or death. When death is not there, deathlessness also is not there. Hence, these two concepts are connected with the two aspects of experience, the subjective side known as consciousness and the objective side known as matter. The whole world of experience constituted of these two aspects, subjective and objective, are brought together into a single comprehension in the supremacy of the Absolute. This is the significance of the word *satyam,* says the Upanishad. One who knows this secret reaches the highest heavens of experience even in the little daily perceptions which one passes through or undergoes. In all our daily experiences, we have the experience of this *satyam,* Truth only, in various forms, various ways and various circumstances.

SECTION 4

Life Beyond

1. *Atha ya atma sa setur-vidhrtir-esam lokanam asambhedaya naitam setum ahoratre taratah, na jara na mrtyurna soko na sukrtam, na duskrtam, sarve papmano'to nivartante, apahatapapma hy-esa brahma-lokah.*

It is this Atman which holds together in a state of harmony the various worlds in the cosmos, so that they may not create chaos. The various elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether, the different worlds, the realms of being, as we call them—all these are held in position on account of

the law of the Atman. The law ordains that what passes for a particular form should maintain that form until the duration of time prescribed for it is exhausted by it in experience. If this Atman were not to exert its law by its very presence, there would have been no system or order or method of any kind. What we call system or method, symmetry or systematic action, internally or externally, is due to the presence of this all-comprehending Being, the Atman. The integration that we feel in our own body, in our minds and the orderliness that we see in nature outside, all these are due to the presence of the Atman. Else there would be confusion everywhere. Anything could be anything. Anything could happen at any time in any manner, without any kind of relevance whatsoever. But this does not happen. There is a cause and effect relationship between one experience and another. There is a relationship vitally established between various things in this world, on account of the symmetrical balancing character of the consciousness of the Atman.

This bridge, as it were, which is the Atman that connects one world with another world, is also like an embankment over which days and nights cannot pass, which means to say that time cannot touch this realm. Days and nights represent the time factor. There is no time here. When you cross this bridge which connects the world of ordinary experience with the realm of pure Being, there is a transcendence of time. This Upanishad says that in the Atman there is no contact with anything that is phenomenal. Anything that you call temporal cannot touch this Being. Neither old age, nor death, nor sorrow can

touch it. Actions of any kind cannot touch it, whether they be virtues or vices. Neither good nor bad, nothing that we regard as valuable here, no kind of regulation of this world can have any validity in that realm of Supreme Integrality. Every evil turns back after having touched this embankment. This supreme world we call Brahman is untouched by evil of every kind. Evil is nothing but the consciousness of body and consciousness of objects. This type of consciousness cannot be there. So it is free from every kind of contamination.

2. *Tasmad-va etam setum tirtvandhah san anandho bhavati, viddhah san aviddho bhavati, upatapi san anupatapi bhavati, tasmadva etam setum tirtvapi naktam ahar-evabhinispadyate, sakrdvibhato hy-evaisa brahma-lokah.*

Even a blind one becomes free from the evil of blindness the moment he crosses this bridge which is called the Atman. Wounded ones are no more wounded there. People who are distressed are no more distressed there. And grieved ones have no grief there. Even night looks like day there. Night does not exist there. Because time does not exist, night and day cannot exist. Eternal light is this Brahman. It is eternal, perpetual, unending Self-luminosity. This is *Brahma-loka.* Here, *Brahma-loka* does not mean some world or realm comparable with the one in which we are living. *Brahmaiva loko brahma-lokah*—Brahman, the Absolute Itself, is called the world of Brahman. It is a symbolic way of representing its own Being as the totality of experience. The field of experience is called *loka.*

3. *Tad-ya evaitam brahma-lokam brahmacaryena-nuvindanti tesam evaisa brahma-lokah, tesam sarvesu lokesu kamacaro bhavati.*

Freedom untrammelled is the blessing of those who have reached this realm of Brahman through practice of continence, and no limit can be there either to their powers or to their capacities to visualise things, or to their knowledge, or even to their own existence. It is limitlessness from every side, as the concluding portions of the third chapter have already told us.

SECTION 5

Importance of Brahmacharya

Now, the means to the realisation of this great Truth is emphasised in the present section. The word used for this means is *brahmacharya.* The character of Brahman is *brahmacharya.* The conduct of Brahman is what we call *brahmacharya. Charya* is conduct. The meaning of the word Brahman, of course, we know very well. The conduct of Brahman is *brahmacharya.* To live as Brahman would be *brahmacharya.* How Brahman is, in that way one should be. It is very difficult to conceive this. It is a total abstraction of the senses in a sublimation of consciousness which recognises itself alone, to the exclusion of everything else. This is the only practice which one has to endeavour for. By the practice of this, one would have performed every other duty in this world, because every other duty is a tendency towards the fulfilment of this duty. This is what the Upanishad tells us in the following passages.

1. *Atha yad-yajna ity-acaksate brahmcaryam eva tat, brahmacaryena hy-eva yo jnata tam vindate atha yad istam ity-acaksate brahmacaryam eva tat, brahmacaryena hy-evestvatmanam anuvindate.*

What we call sacrifice, a holy performance, worship, all this is equivalent to the practice of continence, because continence brings all those results which any kind of sacrifice would bring to the performer of the sacrifice. The knower of Truth, through the practice of self-control, attains those benefits which accrue by the performance of a sacrifice. What we call the sacrificial performance from the point of view of Vedic injunctions is also equivalent to the practice of self-control, *brahmacharya,* continence by which one attains to every benefit which would otherwise come as a result of the performance of Vedic rituals.

2. *Atha yat sattrayanam ity-acaksate brahmacaryam eva tat, brahmacaryena hy-eva sata atmanas-tranam vindate. atha yan-maunam ity-acaksate brahmacaryam eva tat, brahmacaryena hy-evatmanam anuvidya manute.*

Sattrayana is again a session for sacrifices. *Sattra* is a *yajna,* a sacrifice, and a session for the performance of these sacrifices is *sattrayana.* It is a great ritual enjoined in the Vedas. But, this ritual called *sattrayana* is equivalent to the practice of continence, self-control. *Sattrayana* is the word used to designate this particular sacrifice, and here the Upanishad gives a peculiar etymological resemblance of the result that follows by the practice of continence to the meaning of the word *sattrayana. Sath atmanastranam vindate sattrayana* is the way in which we split the word

sattrayana. Sat is Being, *trayana* is the way of freedom or attainment of the benefits of protection in every way. One protects one's self, frees oneself by contact with true Being. This protection or freedom which one gains through contact with Being is also achieved by the practice of self-restraint, *brahmacharya.* So it is equivalent to *sattrayana,* the performance of the Vedic sacrifice. What we call observance of silence, not speaking, *maunam*, is the same as *brahmacharya,* because that again is the silence of all the senses, on account of the contact of the Atman which is the Supreme Silence. One understands things correctly and enters into a natural state of psychic silence by the acquisition of the knowledge that automatically follows the practice of self-control.

3. *Atha yad-anasakyanam ity-acaksate brahmacaryam eva tat, esa hy-atma na nasyati ym brahmacaryena-nuvindate, atha yad-aranyayanam ity-acaksate brahmacaryam eva tat. Tad-arasca ha vai nyascar-navau brahmaloke tritiyasyam ito divi, tad-airammadiyam sarah, tad-asvatthah soma-savanah, tad-aparajita pur-brahmanah, prabhuvimitam hiranmayam.*

Anasakyana is a vow of fasting. This vow of fasting which people engage themselves in is also equivalent to *brahmacharya.* Here again, an etymological semblance is introduced into the interpretation. Atman does not perish at any time. Therefore, this imperishable character of the Atman is comparable with the imperishable results that accrue to one by the practice of the religious vow of fasting. Whatever benefits accrue to a person by this vow come to

him spontaneously by self-control. Forest dwelling which is the *vanaprastha* life, living in seclusion, etc., are all great vows and austerities, no doubt. But whatever one gains by these austerities, vows and practices, one gains merely by self-control, because it is the highest austerity and nothing can be comparable to it.

A person who transcends mortal experience and is blessed with an access into the realm of Brahma has to pass through various mystical experiences. Some of the words contained in the passage that we are discussing refer to certain subtle experiences in the higher realms of Being which a seeker would encounter on his ascent to Brahman, the Absolute. It is said here that there are two oceans in the realm of Brahman filled with nectar where the world this and world that both come together in a fraternal embrace. It is as if two oceans join together to form a single ocean. *Ara* and *Nya* are the two names given to these two different oceans. They exist beyond this world. They are in the third world altogether, not in the physical world, not in the atmospheric world or even the astral world, but in the spiritual world they are. There is another miraculous thing there which one can see after going there. There is a tank filled with exhilarating nectar which is the food of the gods and the food of those who have shed their physical bodies. It is immortal bliss that one would experience there. It does not mean that it is actually a physical food which one would taste through the tongue. As I mentioned, they are subtle references to mystical experiences of the soul, which are referred to here as contact with tons of nectar of exquisite sweetness. There is a tree there which yields all one asks for,

which exudes nectar from its body. It is a huge peepul tree, very vast in its expanse from every pore of which nectar exudes. It is the *kalpavriksha,* as the Puranas call it, a tree that gives anything you ask. If you think something while sitting under it, it immediately materialises itself. That is called *kalpavriksha.* Such a kind of peepul is present there in this higher realm where nectarine immortality flows, as it were, from every side. This is the city of Brahman which cannot be entered by those whose minds are extrovert, whose senses seek sense objects outside. It is an invincible fortress of Brahman. No one can conquer it, no one can pierce through it, no one can break through it, no one can touch it or contact it, because it is not a physical fort. It has very, very rarely been conquered by anyone. Those who have been wedded to world experience through the mind and the senses are unfit to contact or enter into this city. There is inside this city a hall which is called *prabhuvmitam,* built by Brahma himself, shining like gold, resplendent in every way, into which the soul is introduced. These experiences are also described in other Upanishads in different ways, all very mystical indeed, referring to different exhilarating experiences of consciousness through which we pass when we get separated from the body and come nearer and nearer to that which is more and more universal. Language fails here and words cannot express what all this really means. It is only an indication symbolically of miraculous experiences and wonders which we cannot dream of, through which we have to pass as a result of self-control and practice of meditation on Brahman.

4. *Tad-ya evaitavaram ca nyam carnavau brahma-loke brahma-caryenanuvindanti, tesam evaisa brahma-lokah tesam sarvesu lokesu kamacaro bhavati.*

Freedom untrammelled is our reward if we could practise this technique of meditation. We would be the possessors of all these treasures, the nectars and the trees exuding ambrosia, and the oceans of nectar, etc., referred to here. All these would be our possessions and we would be rejoicing in these experiences and be one with them provided that,—a great condition is here,—we are able to withdraw our senses and mind and centre our consciousness in that which we call Brahman. Then we are free and this freedom is what we call *moksha,* Liberation.

SECTION 6

Course After Death

In connection with a description of the passage of the soul after the death of the body, we are introduced into a new subject, that of the existence of certain psychic nerve currents inside us, known as the *nadis.* There are certain *nadis* in our bodies which exist very subtly in the astral layer of our personality and control not only the entire physiological system but also our minds and breathing process,—the entire personality. Those who are versed in the science of *hatha-yoga* will know very well the importance of these *nadis.*

1. *Atha ya eta hrdayasya nadyastah pingalasyanimnas-tisthanti, suklasya nilasya pitasya lohitasyeti. asau va adityah pingalah esa suklah, esa nilah, esa pitah, esa lohitah.*

These nerve currents are supposed to be filled with certain subtle juices which are referred to here as *animna,* very subtle exudation which controls the humours of the body. The point that the Upanishad makes out particularly here is that there is a tremendous connection between the sun and these nerves.

It is not that the sun is spatially very far from us. We have a false notion that the stars in the heaven and the sun in the sky are very far and that they have no connection at all with us here on earth. This intervening space which is the apparent cause for this seeming disconnection is not empty. It is a vital fluid. The ordinary physical notion of the commonplace astronomers that space is not organically connected with the individual has to be given up. In fact, higher aspects of astronomy going into the realm of astrology will tell us that space is not a disconnecting element. If it is, there would be no influence of the planets upon us. They exert a tremendous influence, not merely in a mechanical manner as the law of gravitation does, but in a very, very living and organic manner.

This subtle substance in the nerve currents is of different colours. It may be brownish-yellow, or white, or blue, or yellow proper, or red. These are the types specially mentioned here, though there can be many other permutations and combinations of these colours because we cannot actually count the number of these nerve currents in the system. There are several thousands of *nadis,* but the principal among them are hundred and one in number. It is believed from the standpoint of this section of the Upanishad that the colours of these nerve currents

inside us are due to the influence of the sun upon us. Variegated influences are exerted upon us in respect of the constitution of our personality by the rays of the sun. Even after the sun sets at night, it continues to influence us. The influence of the sun does not cease merely because it is midnight. It is a tremendous influence exerted upon the whole earth. Night and day make no difference for this. When the effect of the sun through its rays has an impact upon the bile in our system, these juices become brownish yellow in colour. When there is phlegmatic element mixed with this bile, it is supposed to be whitish in colour. When the wind element also is included within it, that means to say when the wind humour is a little more predominant, it assumes a blue colour. When there is an equal distribution of the phlegmatic matter and the bile element it becomes yellow, while the reddish element is due to the preponderance of the red corpusles in the blood influencing these juices in the system.

Now, the idea is that the colours of these juices in the nerves are imported, as it were, from the colours in the sun. They are the reflections, as it were, of the sun's rays experienced by us through our own nervous system. So the Upanishad says that these colours are in the sun and they are in the *nadis*. But what about the causes thereof? These colours,—brownish yellow, or white, or blue, or actual yellow, or red—are the colours of the sun's internal structure. We know the sun's rays have colours, and these are responsible for the colours of the juices which flow in the nerve currents.

2. *Tad-yatha mahapatha atata ubhau gramau gacchatimam camum ca, evam evaita adityasya rasmaya ubhau lokau gacchantimam camum ca, amusmad-adityat pratayante ta asu uadisu srptah, abhyo nadibhyah pratayante te'musmin aditye srptah.*

Just as a national highway passing through villages connects one section of villages on one side to another section on the other side, even so the sun's rays seem to be travelling throughout space like highways, as it were, emanating from the sun, touching the heavens on one side and influencing the individuals and the whole earth on the other side. These rays of the sun are like passages or highways in the entire space. They touch this world and also the other world. They enter even the minutest thing in this world, like X-rays penetrating through objects, and we are not excluded from the influence of these subtle rays of the sun. They penetrate through the nerves inside us, they get refracted back into space and return to the sun, so that they convey a message to the sun, as it were, as to what our predicament is here.

Thus we see there is a real living connection between the sun and ourselves here. The rays are like messengers coming from the sun, conveying to us the message from the sun and taking our message from here and conveying it back to the sun, like postmen. This kind of work the rays of the sun perform much more effectively and vitally than the postal department does! The sun there and ourselves here belong to one family, an undivided family. So, we are like brothers. Most undivided families have division among the

members and the undividedness is only an imagination. Really the members of the family are divided. But here the connection is not mere imagination. It is a real interconnection of vital forces in us with the sun and with everything between the sun and ourselves. So we can imagine what integral connection we have really with the atmosphere and the heavens and the stellar system, in spite of our apparently being here as if separated and disconnected. This disconnection is a misconception in our minds.

3. *Tad-yatraitat suptah samastah samprasannah svapnam na vijnati asu tada nadisu srpto bhavati tam na kascana papma sprsati, tejasa hi tada sampanno bhavati.*

It is these nerve currents that are responsible for the withdrawal of the mind into itself in deep sleep. What we call deep sleep, the composure of the mind, the withdrawal of the mind from all sense activity and the retiring from all dream experience also, where one knows nothing,—that experience is brought about by the travel of the various rays of the mind through these nerve currents to the centre of the heart. There the mind then lies sleeping and inactive, doing nothing and knowing nothing. So these *nadis* have some part to play even in the activity called psychic sleep. In the state of deep sleep we are overpowered by a supernal light.

There are various opinions as to what happens in deep sleep. They differ one from the other. One of the theories is that we fall asleep on account of the fatigue of the senses which results in the exhaustion of the mind searching for

happiness in the world. The other doctrine is that the bilious element in our system gets roused up due to the activity of the sun's rays during the day and they make us fatigued in a different way altogether, compelling us to fall asleep. The third theory is that when the mind goes back to its source, it is overwhelmed by the light of the Atman. This getting blinded by that light is in a way equal to seeing nothing. It is seeing darkness, as it were, as perhaps when we gaze at the sun for a long time we see not the brilliance of the sun any more but only pitch darkness. This is a very mystical doctrine of sleep which tells us that we are confronted by the brilliance of the Atman when we go to sleep. And, therefore, on account of there being nothing to see, objectiveness being withdrawn completely, we fall into a mood of so-called unconsciousness, merely because there is nothing for the senses to do and there is nothing for the mind to think. So when there is nothing to sense and nothing to think, what is our condition? It is a falling back into an oblivion of all kinds of experiences.

4. *Atha yatraitad-abalimanam nito bhavati, tam abhita asina ahuh janasi mam, janarsi mam, iti, sa yavad asmaccharirad-anutkranto bhavati, tavaj-janati.*

Now we are introduced to the principal subject of this section. The other points mentioned in connection with these nerves are introductory to the main point which is the theme of the section, namely the departure of the soul after death.

When a person becomes weak due to old age and is awaiting impending death, people get anxious about his

condition. They sit round him thinking that he is about to leave this world. And then they query, "Do you recognise us?", "Do you know I am your father?", "I am so-and-so related to you, do you recognise me?", "Do you know I am your son?", and so on. He is able to reply to these people in a sensible manner as long as the *pranas* do not depart from the body and as long as the mind is capable of working in a normal fashion in respect of the body. But when the mind is compelled by the *pranas* to withdraw itself into its source, no sensation, no thought, no recognition remains whatsoever. Then what happens to that person?

5. *Atha yatraitad-asmaccharirad-utkramati, athaitair-eva rasmibhir-urdhvam akramate, sa om iti va ha ut va miyate sa yavat ksipyen manah, tavad-adityam gacchati, etad-vai khalu loka-dvaram vidusam prapadanam, nirodho'vidusam.*

The very same rays of the sun, about which we have discussed in the earlier *mantras* in this section, with which we have such an intimate connection, become the passage of the soul for its ascent into the higher regions. These rays of the sun are the roads or the paths, as it were, for the soul when it rises upwards after the departure from this body. This description is in connection with the death of a purified person who is expected to attain liberation by progressive stages, called by the name *kramamukti,* gradual liberation. Such a person chants Om at the time of death. Everyone will not chant Om at this crucial moment. Those who are accustomed to such a practice throughout life, who have led a very disciplined life of spiritual contemplation throughout their career on earth, will be able to recollect

this practice at the time of passing, when usually the mind gets confounded due to the action of natural forces.

How much time does the soul take to jump into the sun? It takes as much time as the mind will take to go to any place. That means it does not take much time. The so-called distance of 93 million miles between the sun up there and the individual here on this earth makes no difference to the soul. It does not take any time at all to reach the sun. Such is the quickness of its action. The soul is taken to the sun at such speed through the passage of the rays. The moment it thinks, it is there. So quickly it is taken there.

This sun is the glorious passage to *Brahma-loka,* the realm of the Creator. This is the entrance to the glorious immortal abode of Brahma. And also it is the halting and checking place, as it were, for the unknowing persons. Those who do not carry an 'accepted passport' are turned back from the sun. Everyone cannot go there. The knowers go there and the unknowers return. The latter will not even be allowed to touch that spot. So the sun is the check-post where there is a filtering of souls, as it were. The purified ones are allowed to go beyond and the unpurified ones are kicked back to the earth. He is an entrance to the region of Brahma to the purified ones and also a closed door to those who are unprepared for this ascent.

In this connection there is a verse, says the Upanishad.

6. *Tad esa slokah:*
satam caika ca hrdayasya nadyah tasam
murdhanam abhinihsrtaika, tayordhvam ayan
amrtatvam eti visvannya utkramane bhavanti,
utkramane bhavanti.

One hundred and one are the principal nerve currents in this body. One among these hundred and one moves vertically, as it were, towards the crown of the head. This is usually called the *sushumna-nadi* in Yogic language. If our *prana* and minds can travel through this central nerve current called the *sushumna* and up through the crown of the head, we attain immortality. And this is *kramamukti,* gradual liberation.

But if the *pranas* depart not by this central nerve through the crown of the head but through other orifices in the body, then there is rebirth. It may be in this world or it may be in some other lower world, according to the particular passage which the *pranas* seek at the time of exit. No liberation is possible unless the movement is through *sushumna-nadi.* So here one part of the discussion of this important subject of the Atman in the heart is concluded.

SECTION 7

Prajapati's Instruction to Indra Concerning the Real Self

Now we are introduced into another important aspect of this subject, namely, the stages of consciousness. You may call these the stages of the realisation of the Atman which manifests itself through the conditions known as waking, dream and deep sleep, a subject which is elaborately discussed in the Mandukya Upanishad. Here also, it is discussed in an equally important and interesting manner by means of an anecdote which is very famous in the Upanishads.

On one occasion, Prajapati made an announcement. He was in his assembly hall. He loudly proclaimed a great truth

in the presence of all people. All could hear what he spoke. And what did he speak? What was the announcement he made that is mentioned here?

1. *Ya atma apahata-papma vijaro vimrtyur-visoko vijighatso'pipasah satya-kamah satya-samkalpah, so-nvestavyah, sa vijijnasitavyah sa sarvamsca lokan apnoti sarvamsca kaman, yas-tam atmanam anuvidya vijanati iti ha prajapatir-uvaca.*

This was the proclamation made by Prajapati in an open assembly. "This Atman is free from every kind of evil. It is unaffected by old age or decay of any kind. It has no connection with death. It is free from mortality. Death cannot touch it. It is immortal. It is free from every kind of grief, turmoil or trouble we see in this life. It has no hunger and no thirst. These do not affect It in any manner. Its will is truthful. Its wishes are immediately materialised. All the desires arising from here are immediately fulfilled without any limit of space or time. This Atman is to be investigated into. This Atman is to be known. Whoever investigates into this Atman and knows the nature of this Atman attains all the worlds and fulfils all desires. This is the great benefit accruing to the knowers of the Atman."

Thus did Prajapati make an announcement. Loudly was it told, and everyone heard what was said. Well, the meaning is very clear. It does not require much explanation. What is the content of this proclamation is well-known. It excited the curiosity of many who heard it. The gods and the demons both heard this proclamation made in that celestial assembly.

The gods hurried back to their homes and held a conference among themselves with Indra as their chief. They said, "Brahma has told us such an interesting thing! Whoever knows the Atman has mastery over all the worlds and has the capacity to fulfil every wish or desire. We must know this Atman. Some of us should be deputed for getting training in the school of Brahma. We must get initiated into this mystery of the Atman." The gods chose Indra, their chief, as the proper deputy and sent him to Brahma. They said to him, "Go and have training under Brahma and know this Atman, because he has already made an announcement, that if we know It such wonderful results would follow."

Similar was the reaction of the *asuras*, the demons. They also heard this. They went back to their world and then held a conference. They said, "This Atman is a very wonderful thing and we must know this Atman." So they deputed their chief, Virochana, for the purpose. They told him, "You go to Brahma and have training in this wisdom of the Atman, so that we too will be benefited by this knowledge as was proclaimed." This was the outcome of this announcement.

2. *Taddhobhaye devasura anubudhire te hocuh, hanta tam atmanam anvicchama, yam atmanam anvisya sarvams-ca lokan apnoti sarvams-ca kaman iti, indro haiva devanam abhipravavraja virochano'suranam tam hasamividanaveva samit-pani prajapatisakasam ajagmatuh.*

Both Indra and Virochana met each other, perhaps on the way, but one did not speak to the other about the

purpose for which he was travelling. Each one was keeping the idea as a secret. Indra and Virochana are deadly enemies. They did not say anything to each other as they were very much preoccupied with the objective for which they were travelling. So, both went to Brahma's place and approached him as humble disciples with the sacred offering of *samit.* And having gone there, it does not appear that they said anything. From what the Upanishad says, it appears that they stayed there for thirty-two years without saying anything, observing austerity, controlling their senses and living a very disciplined life. They lived in the abode of Brahma, having said nothing either between themselves or to Brahma himself.

3. *Tau ha dvatrisatam varsani brahmacaryam usatuh tau ha prajapitir-uvaca, kim icchantav-avastam iti. tau hocatuh, ya atma-apahatapapma vijaro vimrtyur-visoko vijighatso'pipasah satya-kamah satya-samkalpah so'n vestavyah sa vijijnasitavyah, sa sarvams-ca lokam apnoti sarvams-ca kaman, yas-tam atmanam anuvidya vijanati iti bhagavato vaco vedayante, tam icchantavavastam iti.*

Then after thirty-two years of this kind of living there, Brahma seems to have observed their stay and asked them: "What is the matter with you? Why are you staying here for so many years observing self-discipline? What do you want?" Then both of them said the same thing, "We are here for some purpose." "What is that purpose?" queried Prajapati. They replied, "O Great Lord, we have heard your great proclamation. You made an announcement that the knower of the Atman fulfils all desires, has mastery over all

the worlds and is unaffected by pains of any kind. In search of the knowledge of the Atman have we come here. This is the purpose of our visit, and for this reason it is that we have been living here for thirty-two years observing austerity." "Oh, that is very good," said Prajapati. And inasmuch as they had already undergone some discipline, Brahma did not ask them to undergo any further vow or any other formality. He immediately started giving initiation: "You want to know the Atman? Here is this knowledge." He gave a very pithy and precise instruction which could be interpreted this way or that way. It was like the statement,—"The Greeks the Romans shall conquer." No one knows what the exact meaning of the statement is. It may mean that Romans shall conquer the Greeks, or the Greeks shall conquer the Romans. Prajapati's instruction was enigmatic.

4. *Tau ha prajapatir-uvaca, ya eso'ksini puruso drsyata esa atmeti hovaca, etad-amrtam abhayam etad-brahmeti, atha yo'yam bhagavah apsu parikhyayate yascayam adarse katama esa iti esa u evaisu sarvesu antesu parikhyayate iti hovaca.*

"That Being which you see in your eye is the Atman," said Prajapati. It was a very strange statement indeed. This was all the instruction. There was no further explanation whatsoever. He is right in what he said, but it can be very easily misconstrued. "That *Purusha*, the Being that you see in your eyes, that is the Atman. Are you satisfied? I have given you an initiation. This is the immortal, this is the abode of fearlessness, this is the Absolute."

Immediately the whole instruction was misconstrued by both the disciples, just as any one of us would have done. They at once came to the same conclusion regarding the reflection seen in the eye. We know what is seen in the eye. A body is reflected. What can be reflected in the eye except a body? "Oh, I see, this is the Atman. What is reflected in the eye is the Atman"—thus concluded both Indra and Virochana. "Then, what is reflected in water, is that the Atman?" they asked. "That which is reflected in the mirror, is that also Atman?" They were so happy that the Atman is so easy to reach. So they want to get this instruction confirmed by asking, "Which is the Atman, that seen as reflected in the water or that seen as reflected in the mirror? Is that also the Atman? Is it true? Is it so?" They queried Brahma, and his answer was very simple. He said, "It is seen in every kind of reflection." "Well, is it in the water?" they again asked. "Yes, in water also. It is reflected everywhere," he replied.

A very short instruction! And both were very happy. The disciples felt that they had known the Atman. Actually the teacher must have felt pity for the ignorance of these disciples who immediately misunderstood the whole teaching and thought the physical body could be the Atman, because that alone can be reflected in this manner. What else can be reflected if not an external object!

SECTION 8

The Bodily Self

1. *Uda-sarava atmanam aveksya yad-atmano na vijanithah, tan me prabrutam iti, tau hoda-*

sarave'veksamcakrate, tau ha prajapatir-uvaca kim pasyatha iti; tau hocatuh, sarvan evedam avam, bhagavah, atmanam pasyava, a lomabhya a nakhebhyah pratirupam iti.

Now Brahma said, "Please go and look at yourselves in a pan of water and see what is there; if you cannot understand anything about the Atman, then let me know." They went and saw themselves in a pan of water. Then Brahma asked them, "What do you see?" They immediately gave the answer: "Up to the hair and the nails, everything that we are, we see exactly reflected in this water. This is what we see. We see ourselves as we are."

2. *Tau ha prajapatir-uvaca, sadhv-alankrtau suvasanau pariskrtau bhutvoda-sarave'veksetham iti, tau ha sadhvalankrtau suvasanau pariskrtau bhutvoda-sarave'veksam-cakrate, tau ha prajapatir-uvaca, kim pasyatha iti.*
3. *Tau hocatuh yathaivedamavam bhagavah sadhvalankrtau suvasanau pariskrtau sva evam evemau bhagavah sadhvalankrtau suvasanau pariskrtau itiyesa atmeti hovaca etadamrtam abhayam etat brahma iti tau ha santa-hrdayau pravavrajatuh.*

Then Brahma said, "This is the Atman." Now what Brahma said was highly significant. But the mystery behind the instruction was so deep that it was again grossly misunderstood by the disciples. Whatever we see is God—this is generally what we say. It is a true statement, no doubt. But it is also an untrue statement. The untrue aspect of it can simply take us astray. But the true aspect of it will,

of course, liberate us from bondage. So is the instruction of Brahma. “What you see in your eyes is the Atman. What you see in the reflection is the Atman. This is the Atman, this is the fearless abode, this is the Absolute.” So they were told about what they saw as their reflection. Happy and composed in heart, both the students went back thinking that they have known the Atman.

4. *Tau hanviksya prajapatir-uvaca, anupalabhyatmanam ananuvidya vrajatah, yatara etad-upanisado bhavisyanti deva va asurva va, te parabhavisyantiti, sa ha santahrdaya eva virocano'suran jagama, tebhyo haitam upanisadam provaca, atmaiveha mahayyah atma paricaryah, atmanam eveha mahayan atmanam paricarannubhau lokavavapnotimam camum ceti.*

When they had gone out of sight, Prajapati thought, “What a pity! These students have understood nothing from me. They have mistaken my teaching completely. They are thinking that their own body is the Atman, and if any one is to consider this body as the Atman and regard it as the ultimate Reality, and teach others a doctrine that this material body is the Atman, it will not succeed. Those who follow this doctrine are going to be defeated everywhere.”

Virochana went to the demons and said, “I have received initiation. Now I know what the Atman is, by which you can control all the worlds and fulfil all your desires. This body itself, what we see here, is the Atman. This is what Prajapati told us. This body is to be adorned beautifully and taken care of well. It is to be tended well, because it is the Reality. There is nothing more real than

this body. It is to be protected by any manner available. It is the knowledge of this Reality, this Atman, this physical embodiment that will help us in fulfilling all our desires. The body is an instrument for the fulfilment of desires and it is through the instrumentality of this body that you have to control all the worlds." This is the doctrine of the crass materialist and the sensualist that the demons learnt from Virochana. This became the doctrine of the *asuras.*

5. *Tasmad-apyadyehadadanam asraddhadhanam ayajama-nam ahuh, asuro bateti; asuranam hyesopanisat pretasya sariram bhiksaya vasanenalankareneti samskurvanti, etena hyamum lokam jesyanto manyante.*

To this day people generally say, "Here is a demon" when a person has no charitable nature. He who has no faith in the super-physical realms, who never worships deities above this world, who never performs sacrifices of any kind, who is intensely selfish, self-centred and body-centred, is generally called a demon in common language. "Here is a demon," they say. This is the doctrine of the *asuras.* Those people who think that the body is very valuable adorn even a corpse. They decorate it beautifully. They cover it with silk, gold, etc., and keep it as if it is very valuable, falsely thinking that it is the true self of man. People are there even now who think that the body has a tremendous value, and even after its death they cannot afford to think that its value is completely gone. This was the conclusion that Virochana arrived at, and all the *asuras* were taught this philosophy. This demoniacal doctrine was proclaimed as a consequence of the initiation that

Virochana received from Brahma in respect of the Atman. This is the fate of Virochana and his followers.

Now what happened to Indra? Did he also follow the same doctrine? Poor man! He did not reach home at all. Halfway itself he had doubts in the mind. He thought, "How could this body be the Atman? That cannot be, because if what is reflected in water or reflected anywhere, which is nothing but this body, is the Atman, then the Atman would be affected by every kind of defect to which the body is subject. So there would be a defective Atman. This Atman cannot then be called immortal. This body is subject to death. When this body goes, the Atman also will go, if the body is the Atman. Where then comes fearlessness and immortality and *brahmatva* mentioned by the Creator? There seems to be some mistake in my understanding of this teaching." So he had these doubts and he did not go to the gods to communicate this knowledge. Instead, he returned immediately to Prajapati.

SECTION 9

Indra Feels the Inadequacy of the Physical Theory

1. *Atha hendro'prapyaiva devan etad-bhayam dadarsa, yathaiva khalvayam asmin sarire sadhvalankrte sadhvalankrto bhavati, suvasane suvasanah, pariskrte pariskrtah, evam evayam asmin andhe'ndho bhavati, srame sramah, parivrkne parivrknah, asyaiva sarirasya nasam anu esa nasyati, naham atra bhogyam pasyamiti.*

Indra had great sorrow and fear in his heart. He thought within himself, "If I am well-dressed, the Atman is

also well-dressed. If the body is blind, the Atman is blind. If the body is crippled, the Atman also is crippled. Finally when the body dies, the Atman also will die. Well, this follows as a consequence of taking this body as the Atman. So it is a destructible Atman into which I have been initiated? This is no good. I shall go back to the great master once again and clarify this position."

2. *Sa samit panih punar-eyaya tam ha prajapatir-uvaca, maghavan yacchanta-hrdayah pravrajih sardham virocanena, kim icchan punar-agama iti. sa hovaca yathaiva khalv-ayam, bhagavah asmin sarire sadhv-alankrte sadhv-alankrto bhavati, suvasane sruvasanah pariskrte pariskrtah evam evayam asmin andhe'ndho bhavati, srame sramah, parivrkno parivrknah, asyaiva sarirasya nasam anv-esa nasyati, naham atra bhogyam pasyamiti.*
3. *Evam evaisa maghavan iti hovaca etam tveva te bhuyo anuvyakhyasyami vasaparani dva-trimsatam varsani iti sa haparani dva-trimsatam varsani upasa tasmai hovaca.*

Again with humble offering, Indra went to Brahma with discomfiture and doubts. His doubts were that the Atman cannot be the visible body or anything visible whatsoever, because everything that is visible is physical in nature and is characterised by the defects of everything that is physical. Prajapati questioned Indra regarding his doubts. "You went satisfied, and now what makes you come back?" "Great master," replied Indra, "how can we regard this body as the Atman when it is subject to these defects? If this body is blind, the Atman will become blind. If the body is diseased,

the Atman would have disease. If the body dies, the Atman will die! So what kind of Atman is this? For these reasons, the reflection cannot be the Atman. I have great doubts. I have come to you for clarification. Perhaps I have misconstrued your teaching. I am having knowledge of a perishable Atman. What is the truth about this matter? Please initiate me further."

"Well, I shall speak to you again, but live here a life of austerity for another thirty-two years. Afterwards I shall speak to you," said Brahma.

Thirty-two years had already passed and again another thirty-two years had to be lived with Prajapati under severe discipline, self-control and aspiration. After the second thirty-two years of disciplined life at the abode of Prajapati, Indra was given fresh instructions.

"What is reflected in the eye or reflected in the water may not be the Atman for the reason you have already mentioned," said Prajapati. "Now I introduce you into a greater reality which is unaffected by the conditions of the physical body. That has to be regarded as the Atman because if the doubt is that the Atman about which instruction has been received is affected by physical character, then naturally that which is not so affected should be regarded as the Atman." In the next section, Indra is introduced into an experience which is not conditioned by the characters of the physical body.

SECTION 10

The Dream Self

1. *Ya esa svapne mahiyamanas-carati esa atma, iti hovaca, etad-amrtam abhayam, etad-brahmeti. sa ha santa-hrdayah pravavraja; sa haprapyaiva devan etadbhaynm dadarsa; tad-yadyapidam sariram andham bhavati, anandhah sa bhavati, yadi sramam asramah, naivaiso'sya dosena dusyati.*

Prajapati now said, "That which you see in the state of dream is the Atman. That is Brahman about which I am going to speak to you. That Being which rejoices and is happy in the state of dream is the Atman, which is fearless and which is immortal. This is the Reality about which I have spoken earlier and into which you seek initiation."

Well, to some extent there was satisfaction of lndra's doubts. The physical body does not affect the conditions in dream. "Yes, this must be so," he thought, and went back, cool, calm and composed in heart. But he was blessed with the capacity to ratiocinate and investigate into what he was told. On the way, before he reached his palace in heaven, he again had a doubt.

"How, could this be?" he thought within himself. "That which is in dream is the Atman? Can it be like that? Yes, if the body is blind, the dream person need not be blind. And if the bodily individual has any other defect such as crippleness, etc., this defect does not affect the dreaming individual. Perhaps even if the physical body is amputated, a limb cut off or affected very seriously, the dreaming individual is not so affected."

2. *Navadhenasya hanyate, nasya sramyena sramah, ghnanti tvevainam, vicchadayantivapriyavetteva bhavati, api roditiva, naham atra bhogyam pasyamiti.*

Now Indra had another doubt. Even if it be that the dreamer is not affected by the defects of the physical body, there is some other defect in dream. One is not always perfect in dream. The point whether the physical body affected the dream body or not is irrelevant. What is pertinent here is that the dreaming individual has the same problems as the waking individual. There is the same pleasure and pain dependent on unreliable factors both in the waking and dreaming body. One feels as if one is chased or driven away or being killed even in dream. One feels sorrow and grief and passes through unpleasant experiences in dream also. Can this then be the Atman? Naturally, it cannot be, because it is not perfect. It is affected by the same changes which the waking body is subjected to. One cries, weeps and sobs when one has painful experiences in dream also. This dreaming Atman is no good. This was the trend of thought which Indra had in his mind when he was halfway to his city in the heavens.

3. *Sa samit-panih punar-eyaya. tam ha prajapatir-uvaca, maghavan yuc-chanta-hrdayah pravrajih, kim icchan punar-agama iti. sa hovaca, tad-yady-apidam, bhagavah, sariram andham bhavati, anandhah sa bhavati, yadi sramam asramah, naivaiso'sya dosena dusyati.*

4. Na vadhenasya hanyate nasya sramyena sramo ghnanti tvevainam vicchadayanti ivapriyavetteva bhavati api

redativanahamatra ityevam evaisa maghavan iti hovacha etam tveva te bhuyo'anuvyakhyasyami vasaparani dva-trimsatam varsani iti sa haparani dva-trimsatam varsanyuvasa tasmai hovaca.

Again with sacred firewood, Indra approached Prajapati as a humble disciple. Prajapati queried, "This is the third time. You went away satisfied, O Indra. Now again you have come. What is wrong?"

Indra mentioned once again all his doubts. "This dreaming individual is no good at all," said he. "The dreaming person can be sorry, can be affected in a serious manner like the waking one and he has even the experience of destruction, death, etc. What is the good of this Atman? This is my doubt. Please teach me the real Atman."

"Another thirty-two years you stay here, leading a life of discipline. Let me see then if I can tell you something more about the Atman," said Prajapati. This is the third time that he was asked to live a life of self-control. Indra must have been a tenacious person, no doubt, to stay like this for the sake of the great knowledge which he sought, by the acquisition of which he aspired for mastery over all the worlds and fulfilment of every kind of desire. So he, according to the injunction of Prajapati, stayed there, the latter's abode, for another thirty-two years, leading a life of intense discipline, austerity and *tapascharya.* After these thirty-two years, Prajapati instructed Indra again.

SECTION 11

The Self in Deep Sleep

1. *Tad-yatraitat suptah samastah samprasannah svapnam na vijanati esa atmeti hovaca, etad-amrtam abhayam etad-brahmeti. sa ha santa-hrdayah pravavraja, sa haprapyaiva devan eta-bhayam dadarsa, naha khalvayam evam sampraty-atmanam janati, ayam aham asmi iti no evemani bhutani vinasam evapito bhavati naham atra bhogyam pasyamiti.*

"Now, I will tell you something different. I will point out the Atman which is not affected by the physical body, nor conditioned by the sorrows of dream, and which is blessed in its own state. What is that? He who is in the deep sleep state, that is the Atman. This is the immortal, this is the fearless, this is the Atman. Which one? That which is in the state of deep sleep," said Prajapati.

Now, that which is in the state of deep sleep has no experience of sorrow of any kind. It does not feel that it is affected by anything. It has no grief. It does not feel that it dies. So in a sense it is all right. The sleeping state is a state of freedom from all the turmoils of both the physical and psychic life in the waking and the dreaming states.

Listening to these instructions of Prajapati, Indra was satisfied for the time being. So, he left Prajapati's abode and went back home thinking that he had known the Atman. But, on the way he again had doubts. He did not reach home. He had great fear.

"What sort of Atman is this that is in sleep? It is as if it is not there at all! It is a zero, an annihilation, a negation of all things! This Atman is a darkness which knows neither its own self nor others. What kind of thing is this sleep? Neither it knows that it is, nor does it know that anything else is. It is like complete annihilation, as it were. How could self-annihilation be the Atman? This kind of Atman is no good. That which does not know its own Self! What sort of Atman is this?" With these doubts, Indra again went back to Prajapati.

2. *Sa samit-panih punar-eyaya. tam ha prajapatir-uvaca, maghavan, yacchanta-hrdayah pravrajih, kim icchan punar-agama iti. sa hovaca, naha khalv-ayam, bhagavah, evam sampraty-atmanam janati, ayam ahamasmiti, no evemani bhutani, vinasam evapito bhavati, naham atra bhogyam pasyamiti.*

With sacred fuel in hand, Indra came to Prajapati as a disciple once again to learn the truth about the Atman. Prajapati asked, "O Indra, why have you come back again? You went away satisfied after receiving my instruction." Indra replied, "This Atman in deep sleep that you spoke to me about does not know anything at all. It is an ignorant Atman. This is a state of apparent self-annihilation. I cannot believe that this is the immortal Atman, by knowing which one becomes the lord of all the worlds and fulfils all desires, and about which you made a proclamation in your court. Kindly teach me about that Atman."

3. *Evam evaisa, maghavan, iti hovaca, etam tveva te bhuyo'nuvyakhyasyami, no evanyatraitasmat, vasaparani panca varsaniti, sa haparani panca*

varsany-uvasa, tanyeva-satam sampeduh, etat tad-yad-ahuh eka-satam ha vai varsani maghavan prajapatau brahmacaryam uvasa. tasmai hovaca.

"Another five years of discipline is necessary. So stay here for another five years," said Prajapati. According to the advice of the great master, he lived there again for five years with intense discipline, and sought initiation again. So, one hundred and one years of *tapas* did Indra perform in the abode of Prajapati for the sake of this Supreme Knowledge. Even now people say: "Indra, such a powerful person with such a brilliant intellect, had to live a life of tremendous austerity for one hundred and one years for the sake of this Atman knowledge!"

What to speak of other ordinary people! How much discipline is necessary! How much preparation is called for! And what intense austerity has to precede this seeking of knowledge from a teacher! This shows the need for the requisite preparation for the reception of this knowledge. It cannot come easily. After these preparations on the part of Indra and his having completed one hundred and one years of tremendous *tapas*, Prajapati instructed about the final truth about the Atman.

SECTION 12

The Self as Spirit

1. *Maghavan, martyam va idam sariram attam mrtyuna-tad-asyamrtasyasarirasy-atmano'dhisthanam, atto vai sasarirah, priyapriyabhyam, na vai sasarirasya satah*

priyapriyayor-apahatirasti, asariram vava santam na priyapriye sprsatah.

Prajapati said, "O Indra, please listen to me. This body is perishable. It is enveloped and overwhelmed by death from every side. How could this be the Atman?"

The physical body is subject to death and transformation, a matter known to everyone. So is the state of the psychic individuality also. The mind is not in any way better than the body in that it is equally finite, limited, and conditioned in the same way as the body is. The limitation of personality in space and time and exclusiveness of oneself from other individuals are similar, whether it be the case of the physical body or the psychic personality. So this individuality is subject to death. Anything that is visible, individual, particular, or finite cannot be the Atman. Neither the body nor the mind can be the Atman. Neither the waking individual, nor the dreaming individual, nor the experiencer of deep sleep can be the Atman. Sleep is a causal condition which engenders the experiences of the mind through dream and waking. It is a potential food which contains the seed of life in the form of these experiences in dream and waking. Hence, being the mother of this phenomenal experience here, it cannot be regarded as being out of touch with phenomenality.

The Atman is neither an individual conscious of itself as a person, nor is it an unconscious entity. It is something quite different. It is not personality consciousness; it is also not non-consciousness. Then what sort of consciousness can it be? Can you even imagine what sort of awareness it

is, where one is not aware of one's individuality, nor is one not unaware of anything? Such awareness is the Atman about which we have to know. It is not the body because it is characterised by change, transformation and death.

No one can escape death as long as he has a body. This body is nothing but a vehicle for the manifestation of the immortal, bodiless Atman. This body manifests one degree of the Reality of the Atman. That is true. In that sense, it is a receptacle, as it were, of this consciousness which is the Atman. The immortal is capable of manifesting its existence through the functions of the body, but it is not identical with the body. This physical experience, the mortal life that we are living here, is incompatible with the immortal life of the Atman. But it is the vehicle in the sense that it has characters in itself by which we can proceed to the nature of the Atman gradually by the logical process of induction. Though it is the vehicle, it is not identical with it.

Anyone who has a body, whatever that body be, physical or psychic, cannot escape being conditioned by the vicissitudes of pleasure and pain. There is no use exulting in pleasure, because it is not going to be there permanently. There is always the undercurrent of future sorrow even at the time of the experience of the present so-called happiness. It is a transitory wind only that is blowing in the form of happiness in this world. So is the case with the sorrow of life. No one can escape the clutches of pleasure and pain as long as one lives in this finite body. No one can be free as long as one has a body. Freedom is a chimera as long as there is bodily individuality. One has to pass through these ruts of pleasure and pain, these transitory

experiences of life as long as one is content to be in this body. The body we are speaking of is not necessarily this body here on earth. It may be any body of any realm of existence. It may be even a body in paradise. That also is subject to destruction, because it is also in space and time, though of a different order. It is, after all, characterised by finitude. And what is finitude? It is the consciousness of something being outside one's self and of something limiting one's own being. This is the fate of everyone who has a body and no one who has a body can be free at any time, in any manner whatsoever.

2. *Asariro vayuh, abhram, vidyut, stanayitnur-asariranyetani. tad-yathaitany-amusmad-akasat samatthaya param jyotir-upasampadya svena rupenabhinispadyante.*

But these difficulties do not arise when the body vanishes and when one experiences a bodiless existence. It is impossible to conceive what bodiless existence is. It is beyond the conception of the mind because of the fact that the mind is only a handmaid of bodily experiences. It simply accepts what the body wants, what the body clamours for and what the senses speak. Whatever the mind thinks is only in terms of the body. So how can the mind imagine what is bodiless? It has to stand on its own head, as it were, which is impossible. So, the injunction of Prajapati that the bodiless existence is free from the vicissitudes of pleasure and pain cannot easily be made intelligible to the mind that is affected by the cognitions of bodily existence.

But here is the truth. The Atman is bodiless. That does not mean that it is an ethereal abstraction. The doubt in the mind that is likely to arise that freedom from the body may be some ethereal abstraction is due to the misconceptions arising consequent upon the habits of the mind. The Atman is not an abstraction from the physical existence. What the Atman is, the mind cannot think, for the simple reason that we are used to imagining that physical bodies are substantives which have qualities and characters inhering in them. In our present condition we can never for a moment think that the substantive can be other than a physical body. Whatever we think is physical only. Even if we close our eyes and imagine something non-physical with the stretch of our imagination, it cannot be non-physical because it will be located in space and time. That which is located in space and time is physical. This is the very meaning of physicality. There is no such thing as non-physical thinking and, therefore, the Atman cannot be thought of by the mind. That is the reason also why we cannot imagine what this bodiless existence means.

The bodiless existence of the Atman is not the divesting of Reality in any manner whatsoever. It is complete freedom and not the negation of anything. It is like the gaining of health from a condition of disease. It is an impersonality of state, an impersonality of condition, an impersonality of experience, and an impersonality of being. The so-called body or the physical atmosphere is a finitisation of this impersonal being. Can we say, to give only a very gross intelligible example, that a lump of ice which is finite in its bodily being is in any way superior to

the causes out of which it has come into existence? The ice is nothing but a solidified form of water. Water is more general in its formation than this limited form of ice. But even water has a cause behind it, hydrogen and oxygen, and we cannot say that the water is superior to its cause in any manner whatsoever. Can you say that water vapour is inferior to the manifestation that is called water or ice? But even these gases, hydrogen and oxygen, are not ultimate causes. They are again manifestations chemically of something superior or more subtle in character, more unthinkable. Merely because something is unthinkable it does not become a non-real existence. The more is the capacity of our mind to conceive causes, the more will we be able to understand the nature of the Atman. Why it looks abstracted is because it is generalised and is universal.

Space is, in a sense, an impersonal existence. It has no finite form in the sense of a body that we can see with our physical eyes. But it cannot be said, even physically speaking, that space or ether is divested of the realities of the physical earth, fire, air or water. We are told that the contents of the earth can be withdrawn by way of sublimation into the causes thereof, so that they become liquids and gases which can all be absorbed into ether, which in turn is not a negation of physical substances but a very ethereal impersonal existence of everything that we call physical. Some such thing happens when we enter into the consciousness of the impersonal Atman. Because of this impersonality of Being, it cannot be affected by anything, because anything which can affect something else has to be

other than that which it affects, and other than that (the Atman) nothing is.

So, this seems to be the implication of the great injunction of Prajapati. Indra might understand it or not, but this is the fact. Prajapati gave some examples to make Indra understand this impersonal nature of the Atman. Air has no body. It is not affected by pleasure and pain. In a sense it is bodiless, because it is not located in some particular place. It is not attached to any particular body. It has free movement. The lightning in the sky is also of an impersonal character to some extent. The clouds are also of an impersonal character to some extent. The thunder is also of an impersonal character. These clouds will vanish into space. They get absorbed into space. Wind also ceases and gets identified with space when it is heated up by the light of the sun. These movements of wind, the falling of water as rain and every phenomenon that we see in the atmosphere—all these are capable of being lost in space ultimately, under certain given conditions. They go to their sources. They arise from their cause and they go back to their cause. Space is the ultimate cause of every physical element. By space we do not mean emptiness, but a most subtle impersonal state of physical existence. So, everything goes back to its cause, which is the universal ether, and everything arises from that universal ether. Even so is the case with all this creation which has arisen, as it were, from this universal Atman and it goes back to this universal Atman.

3. *Evam evaisa samprasado'smac-charirat samutthaya param jyotir-upasampadya svena*

rupenabhinispadyate, sa uttamah purusah, sa tatra paryeti, jaksat kridan ramamanah stribhir-va yanair-va jnatibhir-va nopajanam smarannidam sariram, sa yatha prayogya acarane yuktah, evam evayam asmin sarire prano yuktah.

Just as finite objects appear to get lost in the impersonal causes from where they have come, even so this being, having risen from its bodily existence, attains to the immortal state, shining in nature, as the pure consciousness which it originally was. This is the most serene condition of one's own Self. We cannot say we are serene or composed merely because there are no sounds and there are no contacts. Serenity or composure is real freedom, the experience of which is free from every kind of sorrow or limitedness in the states of waking, dream and sleep. One has to rise above these three states, the physical, the subtle and the causal conditions, which are limitations of the Atman. The three states,—waking, dream and sleep—are the three conditions to which the consciousness of the Atman is apparently attached, and due to which one appears to be an individual. One has to rise up from these limited embodiments. From the waking physical experience, from the limitations of even the mind which works in dream, and from the limitations of deep sleep, one has to rise up. Then it is that one becomes the true Being.

True Being is not unconscious. It is not a cause, nor is it the subtle manifest condition. It is not also a physical body. It is supreme luminosity, *param jyoti.* It is the Light of all lights. It is not a light like the light of the sun, but it is self-luminous Being. It is a Light which does not need

illumination from something else other than itself. It is self-luminous in the sense that it illumines itself. This does not mean that it is ignorant of the existence of others. It is the Self of all beings. It is not the self of one person or two persons, of one individual or a group of individuals. The word 'self' is an abused term; so is the term 'Atman' due to the limitations of language. We are always accustomed to use the term 'self' in respect of individuals as 'myself', 'yourself', 'himself', 'herself', 'itself', etc. It is not in this sense that the word 'self' is used here. It is not this self or that self we are referring to. It is the Selfhood which is the true Being of everything that is.

So, Self-luminosity does not mean the luminosity of any particular self in the sense of a body, because we have already made it clear that the Self is not a body. To bring it once again in association with a body for the purpose of the interpretation of the meaning of the Self would be a travesty of affairs. Self-luminosity is Universal luminosity. It is not luminosity of an individual. Why is it Universal luminosity? Because, it is the Self of everything in the universe. It is the Selfhood of everything that is anywhere. So it is a comprehensive luminosity of universal Selfhood.

"O Indra, such is your true Being into which you seek initiation. This is the true serenity and composure of the Self. You have to stand by your own right. You have to assume your real status. This is freedom, this is called *atma-svarajya,* the freedom of the Self," said Prajapati.

We are not in our own status. We do not enjoy our status when we are in the physical body. We know very well how much slavery is there in bodily individuality. The

conditions of the body which are the outcome of the way in which the physical laws of nature work are limiting us. We are very sorry and very unhappy in this world, indeed. We are not secure, on account of our subjection to the body and its laws in the waking state. Nor are we happy in the dreaming state, merely because we have a mind alone, because the mind is a slave of the body in all its cognitions. So, that too is not going to be our guide and support. What is the good of this sleeping condition? It is as good as annihilation, as Indra himself has pointed out. So, none of these states through which we pass can be of any value for us. We are nothing in all the three states,—waking, dream and deep sleep. We are just nobodies or we are like puppets drifting about, but controlled by strings operated by 'somebody' whose existence we cannot understand. The true status is freedom from all kinds of external subjection to every kind of law outside. And, this can be attained only when the so-called outsideness or externality ceases to exist. As long as there is outsideness, its law will operate. Thus, there is no freedom except in a state of universality. There is no freedom as long as there is body.

Prajapati said: "This is the great truth, O Indra. This is the Atman. Now do you understand what the Atman is? This is the Supreme Person, if you would call It a person." It is not a person actually. We call it a person only by way of expression, explanation for the purpose of helping the understanding of the immature mind. It is the Supreme Being. That is how we translate the term *Uttama-purusha,* occurring here. Superior to the transitory *purushas,* we have the universal *Purusha*. The word *Uttama-purusha*

occurs in the Bhagavad-Gita also in its fifteenth chapter, where we are told that there are two *purushas,* the *kshara* and the *akshara,* and that there is the third, the supreme one, the *Purushottama* or the *Uttama-purusha,* which means to say that there is something transcending both the perishable universe and the imperishable, immanent consciousness.

These descriptions pertain to the life of spiritual freedom, sometimes called *Jivanmukti.* In the usual language of the Vedanta philosophy, there is that state known as *Jivanmukti* which means spiritual Liberation even when the body is there apparently. There are umpteen descriptions of what *Jivanmukti* is, and there is limitation in all these descriptions. It is held by people that the so-called existence of the body of the *Jivanmukta* is there from the point of view of others who see him and not from his own point of view. This is one way of looking at it. We cannot say whether he himself is aware of the body or not. But others see it. So, as long as others see the existence and the movement of the body of that individual, that individual is supposed to be a *Mukta* with a body. That is why he is called *Jivanmukta.*

Others are of opinion that he may also be aware of his own physical existence in a different way altogether from what we feel in respect of our own bodies. The consciousness of the existence of the body is not necessarily an evil, provided it is experienced in the proper perspective. It is the ignorance that is the cause of bondage and not merely the existence of this thing or that thing. The mere

presence of the body will not be a bondage provided it is known in its reality.

This again is a very difficult thing to grasp. What is it to know a thing in reality? No one can explain these things unless one goes to this state personally. And no one can understand it also unless one enters this state. It is usually held that one experiences in this condition of *Jivanmukti* a tremendous freedom of attainment and achievement. What sort of freedom is it? It is not a freedom to do anything that one likes in the sense of a license given to an immature individual. It is a freedom that comes, on account of a knowledge of the depths of everything, not only a knowledge in the sense of an ordinary accumulation of facts by logical knowledge, but an insight into the nature of Reality by identity of being.

To understand as to what the behaviour of this person would be in respect of others, we have only to imagine for the time being what would be our attitude towards a thing in respect of which we have established identity of existence. It is well nigh impossible to conceive it, as long as we have not experienced it, but by a stretch of imagination we can, to some extent, feel what that state could be. How do we feel in respect of the thing with which we are one? What is our attitude towards it? Well, it is neither one of attachment nor one of repulsion, neither one of like nor one of dislike, but a feeling of complete mastery over it. This is the characterisation of that state where one is in identity with everything and yet is not attached to anything or repulsed by anything. The freedom that one experiences in the state of *Jivanmukti* is, therefore, one of complete

mastery born of identity of being, and not a mastery in the sense of control of one person by another person as we see in this world. It is not the exercise of power by one person in respect of another. It is an exuberance of the abundance of power which is inseparable from the universality of Being. Ultimately power is one with Being itself. So, this is something very enigmatic, very difficult to grasp ordinarily. It is nothing but the difficulty in explaining God himself. It is God-being that we are describing when we speak of *Jivanmukti,* an embodiment so called which becomes the vehicle of God-experience in this world itself. Such is *Jivanmukti* about which Prajapati is speaking in these passages.

The perception of a *Jivanmukta* is now described very precisely in one or two sentences. With our present state of mind it is not possible to understand what the perception of *Jivanmukta* could be. We can only have comparisons, illustrations and analogies. But what actually it is, it is not possible for us to understand. Some of us may be under the impression that he sees God, and does not see the world. This is the usual way of giving an opinion about the experiences of a *Jivanmukta.* As I have already stated, these are all our ways of looking at things and our ways of thinking. There is no such thing as seeing God and not seeing the world. Such differences, such contrasts do not find a place in a vision which sees what Truth is. There is a lot of controversy among the different schools of thought as to whether the world is seen by the *Jivanmukta* or not. It all depends upon what is meant by the word 'world'. He sees the world! Yes. Or he does not see the world. Both

statements are correct. He sees the world as it really is, and he does not see the world as it appears to the senses which are distorted in their structure. Our relative values should not be carried to this realm of universal perfection. It would be unbecoming on our part to appraise the experiences of a *Jivanmukta* in the scales of our understanding.

There is no world even now and the question of seeing the world, or not seeing the world, does not actually arise. Whatever is there now, will be there even afterwards. Just because someone has changed his mind, the world is not going to be different. But his mind has undergone discipline to such an extent, and has changed and transformed in itself, that it will see the world in the way it has to be seen. The Upanishads are never tired of telling us that the correct way of perception is to perceive the Self in things and not to see the form in them. This is exactly what the *Jivanmukta* sees. To see the Self in a thing is not to see the thing or the object as such. Even these analogies are inadequate. We cannot understand as to what it is to see the Self in a thing.

Again we will be interpreting the Self as something outside us, to be seen with the eye of spiritual perception. It is nothing of the kind. With this cautious background we have to try to understand these very short portrayals of the grandeur of the *Jivanmuktas* given in these passages of the Upanishad. He may do exactly what you do and what I do. There is no difference in his conduct. He may speak the same language and he may eat the same food. Yet, he is not eating and he is not speaking. This is a difficult thing to understand, because these particular activities and

particular modes of experience are generalised and universalised in his case, so that they no longer become obstacles to his unique experience. They become obstacles only when they are wrested out of their universal context and made one's own, my own, your own, or made to stand on its own legs, independently of others. His actions are not individual actions, but universal movements. And he does not think as I think or you think. His is just a thought which includes every thought. It is the general substance of every kind of mind and thought. So when the Upanishad says that he speaks, he laughs, he moves about and he enjoys, it does so from our point of view only. The question of enjoying or speaking or moving about does not arise for that which has no particularised consciousness, either of space, time, or movement. In the vision of other people, he will be practically speaking just like anyone else. You cannot identify a *Jivanmukta* by observing him. He will look like yourself only. But there will be a tremendous difference inside.

The electrons are not seen with our naked eyes, but the microscope can see them. You keep a solid object in front of you and gaze at the solid object, and keep also a very powerful microscope. Your eyes are seeing the object and the microscope is also is seeing the object. But the two instruments are seeing two different things altogether. What your eyes see the microscope does not see, and what the microscope sees your eyes do not see. But, both are seeing the same thing simultaneously. Now, you are the person to judge whether the object is what your eyes see, or

whether it is what the microscope sees. Which is the correct thing? This is just an example.

You see a world and the *Jivanmukta* also sees it, but he sees it differently from what you see it because of the difference of the instrument of perception. For him an instrument does not exist. He himself is the instrument and he himself is the object seen. He has become that which he is seeing and so it cannot be called seeing, but it is rather 'being'. Seeing, he does not see. It appears that he does not see, because there is nothing outside him, and yet, he sees everything because he is himself that. He cannot be conscious of the body. He is not only in one body. He is in every body. Whatever you think is his thought and whatever anybody thinks also is his thought only. So you cannot say whether he thinks, or I think, or you think. The consciousness of a particular body or object does not arise because all the bodies or objects are his, nay he himself. So the Upanishad says that he has no awareness of a particular encasement in some individual body. Just as bulls may be yoked to drag a cart, this Supreme Self manifests itself as the *prana* and is yoked to this cart of the body, as it were. The bulls do not become one with the cart. They are different. Likewise, this *prana* or consciousness that is yoked to the body is not identical with the body. Whatever the eyes see when they are cast into space is something different in the case of this liberated soul from what our eyes see. From the point of view of the liberated soul, when the eyes perceive something outside, it is not the eyes that are seeing the object, but it is 'something else' that sees.

This was the subtle point which was in the mind of Prajapati when he told Virochana and Indra at the very outset that whatever is reflected in the eye is the Atman. So he is right from his side. But both Indra and Virochana could not understand what his intention was. What sees through the eye is not the eye, but is something different from the eyes. And what hears through the ears too is not the ear but there is something else inside which hears through the ears. So is the case with every other sense organ. The senses do not contact the object. He who contacts is 'somebody else' utilising these senses as instruments.

4. *Atha yatraitad-akasam anuvisannam caksuh, sa caksusah purusah darsanaya caksuh, atha yo veda idam jighrantiti, sa atma gandhaya ghranam, atha yo veda idam abhivyaharaniti sa atma, abhivyaharaya vak, atha yo veda idam srnavaniti, sa atma, sravanaya srotram.*

This eye is only an instrument of perception. What sees an object is not the eye. What sees through the eye is the same thing as that which hears through the ear. The eye cannot hear and the ear cannot see, and so are the functions of the other senses limited to their respective domains. There is a distinction among the functions of the different senses. But we know very well that we can integrate these perceptions through all the senses into a single whole, so that one individual being is aware simultaneously that there is seeing, hearing, etc. In our case, it is only an inference, but in the case of the liberated soul, it is an actual revelation

It is not merely that. It is something deeper than this implication. What sees through the eye also is different from the eye, and what is seen through the eye also is different from the object. It is not the eye that sees, and it is not the object that is seen. It is 'something else' that is seen and it is the same 'something else' that sees. Therefore, the seen and the seer are one. It is as if that 'something else' is beholding itself. It is the Atman that smells, not the nose. The nose or the instrument of smelling is only a vehicle utilised by consciousness for this purpose. One that speaks is not the tongue. It is the Atman that speaks utilising the instrument of the tongue as merely an occasion for its manifestation in that particular manner. So is the case with the ear. The ear is only an occasion for the manifestation of the Atman. The Atman is a single, non-dual, all-pervading Being which works in these diverse ways in the forms of the senses, sense-perception, and the objects of perception. So, there is really no such things as sense-perceptions, the senses and their objects. It is the Atman projecting itself in every nook and corner of the universe through these orifices called the senses and contacting its own universal body, outside which we wrongly call the objects of sense. This is the truth. The liberated soul is fully aware of this truth, while others are ignorant about it, although it is the same in their case also.

5. *Atha yo veda, idam manvaniti sa atma, mano'sya daivam caksuh sa va esa etena daivena caksusa manasaitan kaman pasyan ramate.*
6. *Ya ete brahma-loke tam va etam deva atmanam upasate, tasmat tesam sarve ca loka attah sarve ca*

kamah, sa sarvams-ca lokan apnoti sarvams-ca kaman, yas-tam atmanam anuvidya vijanati, iti ha prajapatir-uvaca, prajapatir-uvaca.

Whatever thinks through the mind also is the Atman. The so-called mind is only a cognitive instrument. But it is a superior kind of instrument. It is a celestial eye provided to us. In fact, the mind alone works in *Brahma-loka.* The senses do not exist there. These manifestations in five ways as hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling do not come into operation in *Brahma-loka.* The great souls living in *Brahma-loka* do not see with the eyes, do not speak with the tongue and do not eat and drink as we do. They merely exist in their mental body. There are some who even think that the mind also does not work there in the ordinary way. It is something super-physical and non-material that becomes the vehicle for the experience of the soul in *Brahma-loka.* This celestial eye comprehends all things at one stroke, unlike the senses which perceive only one thing at a time. This is the instrument that is used in *Brahma-loka.* The moment such a mind thinks, the whole conglomeration of objects connected with that thought appears at one stroke there in its presence. The archetypes of things are perhaps visualised in *Brahma-loka,* not the reflections. The objects which we see in this world are not the originals. They are only reflections. All the originals including those of myself and yourself are in *Brahma-loka.* We are all reflections of the original. We are all unreal bodies, apparitions in some respect, looking like very important persons. Our importance is somewhere else and we are rooted in a higher realm. And we are even now

connected with that realm. Our legs are there though we appear to be moving here! We are reflections and therefore distorted. We are partial and finite, on account of which we are incapable of fulfilling our desires. The original which is the whole, the infinite, alone can work. Reflections cannot really work as efficiently as the original. This efficiency in working comes only when we reach *Brahma-loka.*

Now this *Brahma-loka* does not mean some other world which is several million miles away. It is a state of consciousness. It is within these very walls of our room. It is only a higher frequency of consciousness that is called *Brahma-loka,* into which one can raise oneself even here. Really there is no question of 'here' and 'there'. These are only inappropriate terms used in connection with sense experiences for want of better terms. There is neither 'here' nor 'there', neither 'then' nor 'now'. All these words cannot apply in *Brahma-loka.* Wherever you are, there is *Brahma-loka,* if only you can tune up your mind to the high frequency of its level of consciousness.

The great gods, having Indra as their leader who obtained this superior initiation from Prajapati in the manner mentioned here, contemplate on this Atman. Therefore they are able to fulfil all their wishes by mere thought. They establish contact with their inner mind in respect of everything that they think at any moment of time. All the worlds are comprehended by them. They can penetrate throughout the universe. Objects like huge mountains cannot impede their movement. Physical bodies are no obstacles for them. We sometimes hear in scriptures that angels fly and that gods easily move from plane to

plane. This is so because they are in their subtle mental bodies. They are not physical vehicles, so they are not controlled by the power of the gravitation of the earth. Everything is under their sway. They can have entry into every realm. They can move anywhere. All desires of theirs are fulfilled on account of this permeating consciousness which is not capable of being obstructed by anything.

This is a glorification of the knowledge of the Atman in respect of the gods who had it through Indra. This is a knowledge which can be had not only by gods alone, but anyone, including yourself and myself. It is not a prerogative of any particular person or individual. Everyone is heir-apparent to this great knowledge, provided the necessary discipline is undergone. We can imagine what hardship Indra had to pass through. Perhaps our hardship will be much more. We must be prepared to pay the price of this knowledge. Then it shall come. It can be the property of everyone, but first one has to be ready to become a receptacle for it. As is the case with all those who have realised the Self, so will be the case with everyone who attains this Knowledge. There will be complete control over things and fulfilment of everything, even of a mere wish that arises in the mind, at that very moment it arises. This is what Prajapati said in conclusion.

So, we have here an analysis of the various states of consciousness, through this story of instruction to Indra by Prajapati. This analysis is actually the logical approach by way of inference to the existence of a consciousness deep within every one of us. What Prajapati actually wanted to drive home to the mind of the disciple was that the Atman

is ubiquitously present everywhere in all the three states. That is why he said first that It is in the eye in the waking state, then in the dream state, then in the sleeping condition, and finally as something transcendent. Now, all these definitions are correct, though we should not take them literally. The implication or the actual intention behind the instruction has to be understood. The Atman is in deep sleep state. Yes, it is true. It is in dream. It is also in waking. It is reflected through the eyes and the senses. All these statements are correct, because without the operation in some way or the other of this consciousness, there would be neither sleep, nor dream nor waking. A compartment or a wall, as it were, has been introduced by us between these various experiences, so that we are unable to connect the deeper implications of these different experiences. When we are in one condition, we completely forget the other conditions. When we are awake, we cannot be dreaming or in deep sleep. When we dream, we cannot be in deep sleep or awake. When we are in deep sleep, we cannot be awake or dreaming. This is our difficulty, in spite of the fact that our consciousness is one with the same substratum that is responsible for all these experiences. The difference arises on account of a peculiar faculty in us called the mind. It is not the defect of consciousness which is the same that is in me, in you, and in the *Jivanmukta.* The so-called mind is also not an independent thing absolutely different from the Atman. It is a hybrid, as it were, born from one side partially and belonging to another side partially. However, for all practical purposes of analysis, we may say that it is the same consciousness that we call the Atman which has

somehow got twisted, as it were, and focussed in a single particular direction and got obsessed with the view that that direction alone is real and that every other direction is unreal and does not exist. This obsessed movement of consciousness, the mind, in respect of a particular direction is what we call its target or the object of sense. This is a creation of its own, due to its *prarabdha* and we cannot say how and why it works. But the background is the Atman, the Consciousness. It does not vary. The mind in waking, the mind in dream, the mind in sleep and the mind that has transcended itself,—all these are basically pervaded through and through, warp and woof, by the same consciousness. The feeling that 'I exist' is the Atman speaking in its own language. This feeling is persisting even in dream, and you cannot say that it does not exist even in deep sleep. So it is there always. Not only that, It exists as self-sufficient awareness. We are aware in one way in the waking state and we are aware in a different way altogether in the other two states. There is a difference in the structure of the awareness, because of the difference in the nature of the objects with which this particular compartment-like consciousness is connected. So we get shifted wholly due to our affiliation with the mind to these realms in which it moves, and then it is that we are unable to connect the one phase of consciousness with another phase.

So, Prajapati's instruction is a universal instruction that the Atman is present in every state. Even in the so-called unconscious state, it is there. The unconsciousness is not of the Atman. It is of the mind. It is a kind of stifling taking place in the finitude of individuality. The finitising

principle we call the mind, and that gets suffocated, as it were. It closes its eyes in sleep, in coma, and even in death in a state of unconsciousness which cannot be attributed to the Atman. So, this is the difficulty with us.

Now the transcendent state which the great master Prajapati speaks of as bodiless, free from embodiment, is capable of being attained by means of certain disciplines as is pointed out by the Upanishad. But we are not told as to what these disciplines are. We have been told of *brahmacharya,* but we cannot fully understand what it means. Thirty-two years, again thirty-two years, a third time thirty-two years and again five years, thus one hundred and one years—it may even be a thousand years. But what was it that Indra did all these years? Was he merely having his breakfast and lunch in the hotel of Brahma and getting on there? It was not like that. There must have been something very strange in the way of life he lived there, an inkling of which we can get from a study of the way in which students lived in ancient times in their masters' hermitages and conducted themselves wholly and solely for the purpose of the realisation of the Self.

There should be a complete channelisation of our aspiration in the correct direction. It is for this that we come to the masters. There should be no distraction of aim or purpose. The discipline that is spoken of in the Upanishad is nothing but a channelisation of consciousness. We may call it *brahmacharya,* or we may call it self-control. It is concentration of our entire being in a given direction, so that it does not move in any other way or direction. It is like an arrow moving towards its target.

The arrow will not be aware of anything else, either this way or that way. This arrow-consciousness is what is expected of us and we should not budge until the goal is reached. We are told of this sort of attitude of mind even in the case of comparatively recent personalities like Buddha and others who budged not from the aim which was given to their minds from their own point of view.

Modern times are perhaps unfit for these strict disciplines. We have umpteen problems. But the wisdom lies not in merely saying that there are problems. There were problems even for those people. We should find ourselves in the proper place. We should not misplace ourselves in unsuited contexts. We have to rise from the level in which we are, whatever the level be. It may be a child's level, an adult's level, or a mature mind's level. It may be an official's level, a student's level, or a professor's level. Each one should be able to judge for himself where he stands. He must understand what is the context in which he is placed in the background of the aspiration, what he entertains in his mind, and what are his problems.

We are told that the great Ramatirtha had a peculiar technique of his own for self-control. He used to make a list of all his desires. It was no joke. It was an honest investigation into his own mind. To some extent we can know what our desires are. Go to a secluded place, or sit in your own room, or sit behind a temple or in a forest and think what your desires are. You should not say, "I have no desires." Nor can you say, "I do not know anything." You do know something, because it is the persistent thoughts in the mind that are your desires. When you are free from the

distractions of the daily functions of life, your real desires will manifest themselves. These desires have to be dealt with in a proper manner. That is the discipline called for. The discipline or *brahmacharya* which the Upanishad speaks of is the discipline of dealing with the desires. What are you going to do with your desires? Are you going to just swallow them, or oppose them and crush them, or fulfil them? You cannot answer this question easily. This is the reason why a superior person's guidance is necessary. These desires are like snakes. You cannot touch them, and you cannot keep them lying in a corner. You can not do anything with them. But you cannot keep quiet also. You know very well the nature of the snakes. So a very dexterous method has to be employed. Neither subjugating, nor crushing, nor fulfilling, in the literal sense, but tackling them in the manner they should be tackled, under the circumstances in which you are placed, considering the strength and weakness of your mind, and the consequences also of your actions—this is the discipline. So, many factors have to be considered. All this an individual cannot do alone. Therefore, a Guru is necessary.

SECTION 13

Exclamation of the Perfected Soul

1. *Syamac-chabalam prapadye, sabalac-chyamam prapadye asva iva romani vidhuya papam, candra iva rahor-mukhat pramucya dhutva sariram, akrtam krtatma brahma-lokam abhisambhavami iti.*

We are now about to enter into the realm of *Brahma*. The aspiration has gone to its zenith. So the soul speaks to

itself, as it were. “I shall reach that Supreme.” Literally translated the first portion of this *mantra* means, “From the dark blue one I go to the more defined one, and from the more defined one I go to the dark blue.” Nobody can understand what these words mean if they are interpreted grammatically. The commentators say that these words refer to the state of Supreme Experience. Various commentators have different meanings to say. “From the cause I go to the subtle and from the subtle I go to the cause”—this is one meaning. Another meaning given is, “From Isvara I go to Hiranyagarbha and from Hiranyagarbha I go to Isvara.” A third meaning given is, “From Brahman I go to Isvara and from Isvara I go to Brahman.” “From the Universal I go to the Cause thereof, and from the Cause I go to the Universal,” is still another interpretation. All these are exclamations of joy of the soul that is about to enter into the ocean of Being. And how does it go to this tremendous experience? It shakes its body and cleans it up as a horse does by shaking its body and throwing off all the dust from its hairs. This is not the literal shaking off of our physical body, but a shaking off of the entire vestures of the personality. *Annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya*—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the causal—all these sheaths or bodies are shed automatically.

The soul now exclaims: “I shall free myself, as the moon frees itself from the darkness of the eclipse, from the mouth of Rahu. I shall be freed from the clutches of ignorance, this darkness that has been overshadowing me up to this time. I shall shake off this body which is actually not there. I have

been misled into the feeling that all along it has been there. I shall free myself from this obsession. I shall become a *kritatma,* one who has fulfilled one's purposes. The aim of life has been attained and all my purposes have been fulfilled. There is nothing left to be done now, because that which is the ultimate purpose of all my efforts and endeavours in life has been reached. I shall attain *Brahma-loka,* the Supreme Abode of the Creator. I shall reach this Abode and become one with this Abode."

Comparatively later mystics also have spoken about experiences of this kind. The great saints of India like Sant Ramdas, Tukaram, Jnanesvar Maharaj, and in the West, mystics like Plotinus have explained this experience without using the word *Brahma-loka.* In this supernal experience, there is the consciousness of the interpenetration of things. In the words of Plotinus, everything is mirrored in everything else. It is as if everywhere we have got only mirrors to which individuals are compared. These are not physical mirrors, of course, kept in space, but non-located super-physical mirrors, if at all you can call them such, where every individual is reflected in every other individual. Everything is everywhere. This is the experience of interpenetration in *Brahma-loka.*

SECTION 14

The Prayer of a Seeker for Eternal Life

1. *Akaso vai nama nama-rupayor-nirvahita, te yad-antara, tad-brahma, tad-amrtam, sa atma, prajapateh sabham vesma prapadye, yaso'ham*

bhavami brahmananam yaso rajnam yaso visam yaso'ham anuprapatsi sa haham yasasam yasah syetam adatkam adatkam syetam lindu mabhigam, lindu mabhigam.

The space that we see here is the cause of the differentiation of name and form. What we call the objects of sense are nothing but names and forms. They manifest on account of the presence of space and time. But what is inside space and subtler than it? And is that the Absolute? We can see space but we cannot see what is beyond space, inside space. That which is internal to even the subtlest object of perception which is space is the Atman. That is Brahman, the Absolute. This is the Immortal.

Now, there is the exclamation of the liberated soul. "This is the Atman, this is Brahman. For the sake of this realisation I enter the hall, the abode of Prajapati, the Creator."

In some Upanishads, like the Kaushitaki, we have very beautiful descriptions wherein are given realistic explanations of what things are met on the way by the soul in its ascent to *Brahma-loka*. The soul enters the hall of Brahma, goes to the abode of Prajapati, the Creator, and becomes the glory of every one. Your glory and my glory, all glories are one, because the 'I' enters into everyone. Whatever is the greatness of anything, that becomes 'my' greatness. Great men, geniuses, masters, scientists, artists, whoever they be, whatever greatness they have, that is 'my' greatness, because 'I' enters into their Being, 'I' gets united with their Being. And whatever they are, that 'I' myself am. That is 'my' glory. The 'I' attains everything. 'I' am the

Glory of all glories. What is the Glory of the glorious people in the world? That glory has come not from them, but from something else, and that am 'I'.

"May I not enter into this womb of the mother once again," is the last prayer of the liberated soul. He shall not enter into the womb of the mother. These peculiar words mean, "May I not enter into the womb of the mother which swallows all souls into their embodiment and limits them into personalities."

This is the great wisdom of the Chhandogya Upanishad in its quintessence.

SECTION 15

Parting Advice to the Pupil

1. *Taddhaitad brahma prajapataya uvaca, prajapatirmanave, manuh prajabhyah acarya-kulad-vedam adhitya yatha-vidhanam, guroh karma (krtva) atisesena abhisamavrtya, kutumbe sthitva, sucau dese svadhyayam adhiyanah, dharmikan vidadhat, atmani sarvendriyani sampratisthapya, ahimsan sarva-bhutany-anyatra tirthebhyah, sa khalveam vartayanyavad-ayusam brahma-lokam abhisampadyate, na ca punar-avartate na ca punar-avartate.*

This is what the great Creator Brahma spoke to his children who are called the Prajapatis,—Marichi, Asvini, Kasyapa, Angirasa, and others. This Knowledge has come down through *Guru-parampara* and not through books. Books cannot give this knowledge. By word of mouth has this knowledge been communicated. "Brahma spoke to

Prajapatis." Here too, there is difference of opinion in regard to the interpretation of the meaning of the Upanishadic words. What is meant by saying that Brahma spoke to Prajapati? It may be that the supreme Brahman spoke to the creator Hiranyagarbha also known as Brahma. Or it may be that Narayana spoke to Brahma as we hear it in the Srimadbhagavata, for instance. Or, according to Sankaracharya who has commented on the Upanishad, Brahma, the Creator, spoke to Kasyapa and other progenitors of the family of the universe who are known as Prajapatis. And these Prajapatis spoke to Manu, the first man, the Adam of our Creation. Then Manu gave this knowledge to others. So it has gradually come, stage by stage, from Guru to disciple, and finally to us.

Now, in this concluding passage of the Upanishad, we are given the advice that for the sake of this Knowledge one has to dedicate the whole of one's life in a highly disciplined manner. This vocation, if you would like to call it, is not going to be one among the many other activities in life. It is a whole-souled aspiration, and so it calls for an application of every faculty of ours in a completely dedicated manner. What we usually call the four stages of life, the *asramas,—brahmacharya,* (celibate student's life), *garhasthya* (married householder's life), *vanaprastha* (life of an anchorite), and *sannyasa* (monkhood)—are hinted at in this passage as the requisite process through which one passes for the maturity of one's mind. And at the same time, a caution also is administered that the whole of one's life has to be lived in such a way that it is a preparation for the spiritual goal. There is often a misconception that the spiritual part of

one's life is *sannyasa* alone and the earlier three stages are not. This is what is refuted by all the Upanishads. All the stages of life right from *brahmacharya* onwards are preparations for spiritual life. Rather, all of them are necessary stages in one's ascent to the spiritual goal. It is not that the spiritual life commences only from *sannyasa* abruptly, as it were, and the earlier three stages are disconnected entirely from the spiritual goal. The whole of one's life from birth to death is a spiritual preparation. There is nothing but the Atman, the Spirit in life, and, therefore, no activity can be entirely secular, in the sense of its being bereft of the awareness of God's presence, as one's goal of life. In India particularly we have what are called *samskaras*, the various ceremonies symbolic of the affiliation of every stage of one's life to the spiritual goal. There is no such thing as an unspiritual aspect of life, whether it be *brahmacharya, grahasthya,* or *vanaprastha.* This is a very important advice by which we are told that the whole life of a person, whoever be that person, is an entirely dedicated schooling, as it were, a period of training for the purpose of the final achievement of Liberation. There is no part of life which can be squandered or wasted, or completely cut off from this consciousness of the ideal of one's life.

Even childhood has to be associated by proper means. The moment consciousness becomes self-conscious even in a youngster, the traditional method is to be followed. He gets admitted into the *gurukula* of the *acharya*, the Guru. The sacred training ground is called the *gurukula*, the abode of the Guru, the atmosphere of a spiritual teacher.

There one studies the Vedas. The Vedas are not studied as we are accustomed to study them these days. It is not merely a parrot-like chant of the words of the Vedas without knowing what they mean. Study of the Vedas is imbibing of knowledge, not merely a committing to memory of the words contained therein. And the Veda does not mean merely a book or a particular scripture. *Ananta Vedah*—"Vedas are endless" says an old adage. The Veda is a name given to the repository of all comprehensive knowledge which in turn has various stages and aspects of approach. Very few people have time enough to comprehend everything that is in the Veda. Most often they are introduced into certain *sakhas,* sections only, and even all those sections cannot be studied. Even if all those sections are taught, everything that is contained in them cannot be absorbed into one's mind. However, this study of the Veda is a very necessary stage of training.

There is another important advice here which is likely to miss the attention of ordinary people. The study under a preceptor should be done during the period of time which one has, apart from the time one spends for the service of the Guru. The student will not be studying from morning till evening sitting with a book, completely ignoring his duty of serving the Guru. Study is secondary and is to be undergone only at other times, the time of recess, as it were, which is at his disposal after he has completed his daily duties to his Guru.

Having undergone this training for the required period under a Guru, one usually enters the household life. The life of a householder should not be one of distracted secular

activity. It is not the opposite of *sannyasa,* as people generally think. It is like *brahmacharya*, one of the steps leading to *sannyasa,* and at the same time, is the most mature part of one's life. There is a manifoldness of duty enjoined upon the householder. His difficulties are many and, therefore, the training that he undergoes in that period is more effective, and is a greater preparation, as it were, than in any other stages. Having settled in a proper household after his period of training under a Guru is over, one should find time to be seated in a holy or sacred place and continue the study in order not to forget study, because it is the art of keeping the mind impressed with the consciousness of the goal of life. Else one will forget everything. Though one may have studied something in the earlier days, one may forget everything and the mind may get rusted. *Svadhyaya* is a necessary perpetual training for everyone, which is not actually the process of acquiring new knowledge, but a way of keeping the mind aware always of what it has studied, and the way of applying this knowledge in practice to attain the great goal. So *svadhyaya* is a permanent requisite. Always you have to be studying these great texts lest you may forget your goal. A householder has of, course, virtuous children or virtuous disciples who will receive this knowledge from him. Under him they undergo this kind of training. Thus he fulfils his obligation as a householder for the required period.

Then comes the stage of *vanaprastha.* Here he withdraws his senses. All the activities get centered in the Self when the senses are withdrawn. Instead of external activity, there is now internal activity. A psychological

function replaces all the physical duties such as sacrifices, the *panchamahayajnas.* The various services that he was rendering outwardly in the world previously now become the responsibilities of his life in an internal world of self-control and withdrawal of the senses.

The great vow of the *sannyasin* is *ahimsa,* that he would never harm anyone. He is the embodiment of the great fearlessness that he extends to all living beings. No one will be afraid of seeing a *sannyasin,* for he will not do any harm or anything bad, as his heart has expanded beyond the limits of his own body and his family. The term *anyatra tirthebhyah* here used with reference to *ahimsa* means that it would be difficult to extend this obligation of non-injury in an unconditional manner on account of the fact that we live in a world. Various interpretations have been offered for this particular phrase. The usual meaning would be the sacrificial injunctions of the Brahmanas of the Vedas that the committing of *himsa* is forbidden everywhere except in prescribed places or prescribed occasions. The more generous interpretation of it, as is offered by many commentators, is that the prescribed occasions are those times or periods of activity when you are likely to commit some kind of harm to creatures inadvertently, as it were. It is not possible to live a life of such an extreme type of *ahimsa* on account of our not being aware many a time as to what we are doing. Of course the intention is not that you should consciously do any harm. Unconsciously harm is done. This is done particularly by the householders because of their living in a house having a kitchen with a fire place, a water place, a grinding place, a broom, etc.,

where insects, flies and the like are likely to be crushed and killed inadvertently. Various other occasions also are there in life which cannot be recounted here when you are likely to cause unconsciously harm to living beings. These of course are excluded, if they are unconsciously done. But they can be expiated by the intense *sadhana* which the *sannyasin* is expected to perform in the purely internal spiritual life that he lives full of proper meditation.

The whole of one's life should be lived like this. The moment one becomes conscious of the goal of one's life, then it is up to one to see that one's every activity is somehow or other reconciled with this goal. One should not do any incompatible thing against one's own conscience and against the purpose that one has on hand. Thus it is that it is necessary to have one's entire life transformed into a spiritual art and complete dedication.

Often it is said that the last thought is the determining factor of one's future fate. The last thought that may come to the mind at the time of death is the fruit of this tree of the long life that one has lived in this world. We know very well that the fruit cannot be different from the nature of the tree. So, the last thought cannot be something quite contrary to or different from the various impressions produced in the mind by the continuous thoughts that it was entertaining throughout life. And if one has to have this spiritual ideal maintained in one's consciousness at the time of departing, then it has to be maintained as a discipline throughout one's life.

Thus one reaches the great abode of the Creator, *Brahma-loka,* from whence there is no return. Once we go

there, we will not come back. This is very frightening to many people. They interject: “We don’t come back! Is it like entering into a lion’s den!” We need not enter into this subject, because it looks very funny that after studying the whole Upanishad we have an uncanny fear that God will swallow us and we will have no occasion to come back. The question of coming back does not arise because we become one with the universal Reality. This going and coming are only ways of speaking in this phenomenal world. What happens is actually a union of consciousness with the All-Being, the Absolute.

Here concludes the Chhandogya Upanishad. Before concluding the study of this Upanishad, I shall take up two sections from the earlier portions, which we shall study under Appendices I and II. They are called the Sandilya-Vidya and the Samvarga-Vidya.

Appendix I

SANDILYA-VIDYA

Sandilya, the great Rishi, had this revelation of the Supreme Being. *Vidya* is a meditation, an art of thinking on the Supreme goal. This meditation begins with the proclamation of the all-comprehensiveness of Brahman: "*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*—All this is verily Brahman." This *vidya* is contained in Section 14 of Chapter Three of the Upanishad.

1. *Sarvam khalvidam brahma, tajjalaniti santa upasita, atha khalu kratumayah puruso yatha-kratur-asmin-loke puruso bhavati tathetah pretya bhavati, sa kratum kurvita.*

This is a very famous passage in the Upanishad. This is how we have to meditate, calmly, quietly and peacefully. We have to meditate that everything comes from That, everything is sustained in That, and everything returns to That. That which is the origination, the sustenance and the dissolution of all things is this Brahman. Inasmuch as it is the cause of all things, naturally, every effect in the form of this creation is contained there. We too are effects of creation. So, we too are contained in it. There is a great justification in the assertion that everything is the Supreme Being. Logically and naturally, when the effects are all contained in the cause, one should be able to appreciate the all-comprehensiveness of the ultimate cause. This cause only is, inasmuch as no effect can be separated from the cause. There is an undifferentiated relationship between the effect and the cause. There is no gap between the one and the other. We are, therefore, not isolated from the cause.

There is no vital cut or gulf between this universe of effect and its cause which is Brahman. This means to say that even now we are vitally connected with the Absolute. We are maintaining even at this moment an organic relationship. The difficult part of this meditation is that we ourselves, as thinkers, are associated vitally and organically with the Supreme Being on whom we have to meditate. We cannot think like this. For, the mind refuses to think. We can think something outside us and we can think of the whole universe practically, but we cannot think something in which we ourselves are involved, because there it is that the mind finds itself incapable of functioning. There is no such thing as mind thinking itself.

Aristotle said that God is thought thinking itself. It is very difficult to understand what it means. How can thought think itself? It always thinks something else. So, Brahman cannot be thought by the mind, and yet this is the injunction of the Upanishad. The highest kind of meditation is *sarvam khalvidam brahma.* All this manifestation which you see in the form of individuality, whether organic or inorganic, visible or invisible, wherever it be, is That. Nothing but That is.

Again to reiterate, the most difficult thing to swallow here is that we ourselves are a part of That. The meditator is part of that which is meditated on. How is one to even think? It requires a tremendous psychological preparation and an extraordinary type of purity of mind to appreciate what this instruction is. This is not an ordinary type of meditation. It is most extraordinary in the sense that you are contemplating yourself, as it were, and not something

or somebody else. That is implied in the statement that everything is included in That, not excluding oneself who meditates.

Thus should you meditate: "*Sarvam khalvidam brahma,*—all this verily is the Supreme Absolute Brahman." How do you contemplate Brahman? The whole universe—you can imagine what the universe could be—has come from That. It has not come from That as something different from That. The very substance of this creation is the substance of the Absolute. That is one aspect of the matter. The other aspect is that there is no disconnection between the effect and the cause. So you can imagine how hard it is to entertain this thought. Everything is That because of the effect being non-disassociated from the cause. It is connected with the cause. It is sustained, even now at the time of the apparent creation, in That only and it will go back to That. So there is no place for anything to exist except That. Also, there is nothing other than That. Thus, one should meditate.

The word *kratuh* has several meanings. It means an effort of the will, an action of the mind, a determination of the understanding and a meditation that you practise. All this meaning is comprehended by the word *kratuh*. The whole of one's life is nothing but a determination or willing in this manner. Throughout our life we will in some way or other. The individual is an embodiment of action performed through his will. And whatever we will, that we become, because of the intensity of the will. As we affirm, so we experience and that we become. Our experiences are nothing but our affirmations through will. We have

affirmed something very intensely in our previous lives, and the reward of those affirmations is the present series of experiences we are passing through here. So this is a caution, again administered to us. Inasmuch as whatever we think intensely and continuously, and that we are going to become, what should we think throughout our life if we want to become Brahman? We want to become the Absolute Itself. What should be the kind of thought that we should entertain? What should be the type of affirmation that we should make? How should our will work? This need not be explained further, because it is obvious. Therefore, my dear readers, spend your time in absorption of your thought in Brahman. This should be your meditation throughout your life. The Upanishad gives some further details as to how we should conduct this meditation in our life.

2. *Mano-mayah prana-sariro bha-rupah satya-samkalpa akasatma sarva-karma sarva-kamah sarva-gandhah sarva-rasah sarvam idam abhyatto'vakyanadarah.*

The whole mental world is permeated by this Being. The light of the mind, the light of understanding, the light of intelligence is the light of Brahman. It appears to be embodied through these *pranas* and the body. They are a vehicle, an embodiment to particularise this infinite consciousness. And as I have mentioned already, even these as effects are not different from consciousness, the cause. So, this mental body or vital body of ours is not to be regarded as distinct from the Absolute. They are only occasions for the meditation on Brahman. From the

particular we have to go to the universal. Though the particular is limited in comparison with the expanse of the universal, qualitatively it cannot be different from the universal. Just as from a drop you can know the ocean, from the particular we can reach the universal. Thus is the meditation. It is effulgence in its nature and light is its character. It is the glory of consciousness that is effulgence.

Whatever is willed through this consciousness is materialised at once—*satya-samkalpah*. This is what we studied in the last chapter of this Upanishad.

The Self of this Being is as vast as space. It is not a limited individual self. The whole space itself is the Self—*akasatma*. As vast as space is, so wide is this Self which is Brahman. It is, therefore, all-comprehensive.

All actions are its actions—*sarvakarma*. It performs everything. Whatever I do, whatever you do, whatever anyone does, whatever happens anywhere in all the levels of creation—all these are activities of that Being. It is the fingers of God working through all these phenomena of nature. All the ways in which the mind thinks are the ways He thinks.

Sarvakamah—all the wishes in your mind, all the desires, are the desires of the Self ultimately in some way or other. Every kind of desire, whatever the nature of the desire be, is nothing but a movement of consciousness towards universality in some way or other. This subject is discussed in some detail in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which describes how every desire is universal desire ultimately. Anything that you smell through the nose is again an activity of That Being only—*sarva-gandhah*. This

again has been mentioned earlier, in the last chapter of the Upanishad. The objects as well as the means of cognition are both Itself only appearing objectively on one side in one aspect, and subjectively in another. All the tastes, anything that you contact through the organ of taste, is nothing but Its activity—*sarva-rasah*.

Everything is enveloped by That—*sarvam-idam-abhyattah*. What further can we speak of It? It is enveloping all—*isavasyam idam sarvam* as the Isavasya Upanishad puts it. Inside and outside It is there as the *antaryamin.* It does not speak, but It can convey Its message and It is free from agitation and eagerness—*avaki anadarah*. It has no desires in the ordinary sense. It is not eager to grasp things, grab things and have things, because It is all things. This is not merely a teaching giving some information, but it is instruction about meditation, the way in which a mind has to be organised in daily meditation so that it may not wander from place to place and may not think of many things. The many things do not exist. What will the mind think when it knows this truth!

3. *Esa ma atmantar-hrdaye'niyan vriher-va, yavad-va, sarsapad-va, syamakad-va, syamaka-tandulad-va, esa ma atmantar-hrdaye jyayan prthivyah, jyayan antarikasajjayan divah, jyayan ebhyo lokebhyah.*

This great Being, the Supreme Brahman is in one's own heart as fine and subtle as one can conceive of. It is the subtlest. It is most subtle even among those that we regard as very subtle in this world. Subtler than a grain of rice or paddy, subtler than a grain of millet, subtler than the kernel of this grain, so small, subtler than a mustard seed is this

great Being who is seated in one's heart. But does it mean it is as small as a mustard seed? No, it is at the same time as vast as the whole of creation. So, objectively also it has to be contemplated, in the same way as we contemplate it subjectively as our own deepest Self inseparable from the whole cosmos. This little thing referred to as one's own Self here is bigger than this vast earth. It is not merely as fine as a millet seed, but also vaster than this whole earth, and this entire atmosphere. It is vaster than all the worlds, not merely this one atmosphere. It is larger than even the sky and the heavens. It is vaster than all the fourteen worlds of creation which cannot comprehend its magnitude. So vast is its objectivity and magnitude, being infinite in its expanse, and yet it is in me, in you, and in every one of us, as if it is so little like a small flame of light.

This symbology is given only for the purpose of contemplation, because it has to be taught to us that it is not merely an infinite expanse outside us, unconnected with us as a transcendent something, but is identical with our own Being also. The Upanishads are never tired of hammering this idea into us that the Supreme Being is both objectively infinite and subjectively the Self of everyone. This is the principal meditation of almost every part of any Upanishad. It is the vast infinitude, incomprehensible to the mind, and yet nothing can be so near to us as That. It is so distant as the distant horizons themselves because of its infinitude and vastness, and yet so near as to be well nigh inseparable from us because it is the Atman itself.

4. *Sarva-karma sarva-kamah sarva-gandhah, sarva-rasah, sarvam idam abhyatto'vakyanadarah, easa*

ma atmantar- hrdaye etad-brahma, etam itah pretyabhisambhavitasmi iti yasya syat addha na vicikitsasti iti ha smaha sandilyah, sandilyah.

Sandilya, who was a great sage, proclaims this great knowledge: "This great Being whose actions are all actions, whose desires are all desires, whose functions are all functions through the senses, is inside me and It is that which is inside everything."

The reason why the Atman is called Brahman is because it is the Self of all. As the Self of each one, it is called the Atman. As the all-comprehensive Self, it is called Brahman. The doubt that may arise in the mind as to the localisation of the Atman is removed by the assertion that it is the Self of all. It is a contemplation on the all-pervading Self, the universal Self. Therefore, the Atman in one is the Brahman everywhere.

"This Brahman is what I am"—thus we should meditate. The moment we get up in the morning this thought should come to the mind. The progress of our life in spirituality can be judged from the first thought that occurs to the mind in the early morning when we get up. What is the first thought that comes to our mind the moment we wake up from sleep? That will give us an idea as to what we have been thinking throughout the day. The conscious mind remains suppressed and the impulses alone work in the deep sleep state, and these impulses will thrust up certain ideas the moment we get up. It may be something which is connected with this world or something which is related to our *sadhana*. It may be a thought of anxiety or it may be a thought of freedom. It

may be a thought of anything, depending upon the thoughts during the waking state. From this we can have an idea, an inkling as to how we have been conducting our thoughts.

The Upanishad tells us that we have to meditate in this manner throughout the day. As much time as we can spare for this purpose, we must utilise. We have to grow gradually, stage by stage, to that state of Being, when we will be able to give all our time for meditation. Many a time we have difficulties in finding time for meditation, because of the vocations of life. So, in the earlier stages, the advice is that as much time as you can spare should be set apart for the purpose of meditation, even if it be only for half an hour or forty-five minutes, or even less than that because it is not easy for the mind of the neophyte to accept that everything that it thinks can somehow or other be reconciled with spirituality. It always regards the ordinary life of the body and the senses and social existence as different from spirituality. This is the habit of the mind, although it is not correct. This is what it believes. In the beginning, therefore, it is necessary to give some time to meditation conveniently, of course, not with great effort and hardship on oneself. The life of the spirit is not one of suffocation or stifling of the mind. It is a gradual growth of the mind spontaneously, like the growth of a baby into an adult without any kind of stifling of functions. We should give as much time as is conveniently possible, with satisfaction to the mind. Then the time has to be increased by reduction of external activities, sleep, and the unnecessary things that we do in life which are not actually

essential. You may be going to a club or to a picture, or you may be having a chat with some friends. All these can be gradually curtailed, because they are not essential. Essentials alone should be maintained. And still later on, in a more advanced stage, we must learn the art of seeing no distinction between our ordinary life and spiritual life. That is what is actually expected of us as spiritual seekers.

There is no such thing as an unspiritual life, finally. This has been told to us again and again in the Upanishad. Things look unspiritual on account of our peculiar way of evaluation. The idea of 'I-ness' and 'my-ness' is the cause of this peculiar notion in the mind, of there being a distinction between the ordinary life and spiritual life. We should not however do things which we regard as wholly unspiritual, or irreconcilable with our ultimate aim. We should not do also that which is wholly irrelevant to our life. We should not have any kind of despondency or diffidence in our heart that the most part of our life is spent in unnecessary work. There is always some connection between our work and the spiritual purpose that we are having in our mind. But the wisdom lies in understanding what this connection is. The connection is one of non-distinction. Though this connection is there, we are not able to keep its awareness. When this awareness arises we enter into a flood of an all-comprehensiveness of approach through every aspect of our life.

So meditation should be a continued practice. How long should we continue the meditation? We must continue until we attain Self-realisation or until we die, whichever is earlier. Whoever has such intense faith, as is

mentioned here, shall get it. If we have intense faith we will get it. You should not have a shaking mood of the mind. There should not be any doubt or suspicion. "Am I fit for it?" "Will I get it?" "What is the good of it?"—this kind of doubt should not arise in the mind. "I must get it." "I am doing the best possible thing." "I am putting forth all my effort to the extent of my possibility." "I am doing my duty." Such a doubtless attitude should be maintained throughout life. If one has faith of this kind, one should certainly attain it. There is no doubt about it. This is what the whole Upanishad is teaching, which is compressed in this *vidya* called Sandilya-Vidya. Though it is very short, yet it contains everything.

The meaning of this *vidya,* meditation, is very profound. The more we think about it, the greater and deeper are the meanings that we will discover in it. And these meanings will be discovered as we go deeper and deeper into meditation. So here, we have got in the Sandilya-Vidya the whole subject of the Upanishad clinched, as it were, kept inside our fist for the purpose of daily habituation of the mind to spirituality and God-awareness.

This *vidya* contains the art of adjusting the mind inwardly as well as outwardly in the beginning by alternate processes, and then finally grasping the comprehensiveness of Brahman, the Reality in its simultaneously dual aspect of universality and individuality.

Adau brahmaham-asmityanubhava udite khalvidam brahma pascat, is a passage from Acharya Sankara's 'Satasloki' wherein he makes a reference to this *vidya*. He

mentions how the consciousness rises gradually from the level of individual perspective to the universal one. It is not easy to understand the meaning of what Acharya Sankara is saying here, because of the fact that we cannot distinguish between our personality or individuality and the Atman, to which reference is being made. We always mix up the two. The Atman is myself and we know very well what we understand by the word 'myself'. It is an inveterate habit of the mind to think in terms of the body. So whatever be the thing that is associated with individuality is at once identified in meditation. The kernel that is within us, the essence that we are, is to be separated from the body that we appear to be, in this technique of meditation. In the beginning, there is consciousness that one's own self is all. Now this is not merely a statement that is to be studied grammatically or linguistically, but is a matter of experience. One's location in all things in addition to one's own body becomes a revealed truth in the advanced stages of this meditation. There are some examples to show how this happens.

It is something like the space within a vessel realising that it is everywhere. Just compare yourself to a little space that is contained in a small glass tumbler which has got obsessed with a notion that it is inside the glass tumbler only and that what is outside as space is not itself, but an object of itself, something external to itself. It has to elevate itself to the awareness of the non-distinguishability between itself and the external space. That is the real meaning perhaps of what is in the mind of Acharya Sankara. I am the all—the space within the vessel realises that it is all-

space. It does not mean that it has become all-space by any effort of its imagination or activity. It is just a rising to the awareness that the wall around it, namely, the tumbler or the glass, is not going to limit its all-pervasive nature.

Then the realisation comes—*khalvidam brahma paschat*. It is not merely the 'I' that has become all, but every one is the same all. The Self that is in me is not in me only. The assertion "*Aham brahmasmi*—I am Brahman" can be made by each centre of individuality in a similar manner. This is a larger realisation, says Sankara. It is a rise from the limitation of one's individuality up to the cosmic Reality of one's essence, with a simultaneous awareness of the identity of every self, the so-called multiplicity of selves, with this single Self. So it is the total of all the selves in an indistinguishable mass rising to a single comprehension of the great Absolute Brahman. This is the actual inner import of the meditation which is called Sandilya-Vidya.

Appendix II

SAMVARGA-VIDYA

Samvarga-Vidya is the *vidya* that was taught by the sage Raikva and is contained in Chapter Four, Sections 1 to 3 of the Upanishad. It is the nature of the subject that is indicated by the word *samvarga,* which is actually the process of absorption. The knowledge of the all-absorbing one is the actual meaning of Samvarga-Vidya. We are introduced into that which is all-absorbing. What is that? How is it taught? Let us see. The story is like this:

SECTION 1

1. *Om. Janasrutir-ha pautrayanah sraddhadeyo bahudayi bahupakya asa, sa ha sarvata avasathan mapayan-cakre, sarvata eve me (annam) atsyantiti.*

There was a king called Janasruti who was supposed to be the great-grandson of the emperor perhaps called Janasruta. This Janasruti was a reputed ruler who was well known for his immense charity. He was a great giver and had immense faith in the act of giving. And he used to give in plenty. He was very happy that he was in a position to give much in charity. What is more, he gave with great respect. His kitchen was always active. He used to have a lot of food cooked in his kitchen so that he might give it free to people. Such a king was he. He had built several rest houses everywhere. He must have been a very good man to do so much charity. He maintained not only rest houses, but also *choultries,* inns, etc., built everywhere with the feeling that people would come and stay there and eat food in his name. "They will eat my food," he used to say with great exaltation. Such a great king was, according to this

Upanishad, not merely famous in the social or political sense, but also was an advanced soul inwardly. He was a highly religious person and spiritually well trained due to the purity of his mind, the goodness of his heart, and the great charities that he was doing. Thus, he was an exceptionally great person outwardly as well as inwardly.

2. *Atha ha hamsa nisayam atipetuh, taddhaivam hamso hamsam abhyuvada, ho ho'yi bhallaksa, bhallaksa, janasruteh pautrayanasya samam diva jyotir-atatam, tanma prasanksis-tat-tva ma pradhaksir-iti.*

The story tells us that perhaps on a hot summer night the king was sleeping on the terrace of his palace. He was lying on his couch and some swans were flying across the sky. One of the birds which was behind called to the one that was flying in front, "Oh, stupid one! Do not be careless." It used the word *bhallaksa*. They say *bhallaksa* means wide open-eyed, well-seeing. It is an ironical way of saying that you do not see things properly. "You have got big eyes, you can see well, but you are not seeing that some danger is ahead of you. Do not rush like this. There is the great king Janasruti just below you. His effulgence is rising to the skies and his glory is reaching up to the heavens, as it were. Do not cross this effulgence lest you should be burnt by this glory of his. He is such a great man and you are crossing him. Do not go carelessly with your eyes closed." This was what the bird behind told the one that was flying in front.

3. *Tam u haparah pratyuvaca kam vara enam etat santam sayugvanam iva raikvam attheti. yo nu katham sayugva raikva iti.*

But, that other one which was told like this retorted back: "You are referring to some Janasruti whose effulgence is rising up, which I should not cross! Who is this Janasruti? What sort of man is this that you are speaking of, as if he is as great as Raikva with the cart? You speak as if this man is so great that his effulgence is going to the sky and I shall be burnt by the greatness and glory of this man. Who is this gentleman? What is he in comparison with that Raikva with the cart?"

This was the conversation that went on between the two birds that were flying above. The king heard how he was referred to by the two birds, the one praising him and the other saying that he did not deserve the praise because there was someone who was greater than him.

4. *Yatha krtaya vijitayadhareyah samyanti, evam enam sarvam tad-abhisameti, yat kinca prajah sadhu kurvanti, yastad-veda yat sa veda, sa mayaitad-ukta iti.*

In the play of dice, there are numbers marked on each face of the dice, number 1 in one face, number 2 in another, number 3 in the third, and number 4 in the fourth one. Now in this play of dice whoever casts the highest throw is called *krita*. He wins all the other ones. Four includes three, two and one. So he who has won the fourth throw has automatically won the other three also. He need not go on winning the other three one by one. The other three are automatically included in the fourth one which he has won.

In a similar manner, all the virtues that people do anywhere in this world are included in the virtue of this great person called Raikva. His virtue is like an ocean which swallows up all the dribbles, rivulets and rivers of the little virtues that other people do anywhere. So one can imagine what sort of person he must be. His goodness, greatness, virtue, righteousness is like an ocean which swallows all the other virtues of anybody, anywhere in this world.

We have got four ages called *krita, treta, dvapara* and *kali*. According to the traditional calculation of the calendar, *kali-yuga*—this present age in which we are living, sometimes called the iron age—is supposed to extend for 432,000 years. That is the duration of *kali-yuga*. Twice the duration of *kali-yuga* is the duration of *dvapara-yuga*. Thrice the duration is *treta-yuga,* and four times the duration is *krita-yuga*, which is the longest in duration. Its extent is such that it includes all the other *yugas* in it. So, in comparison with these four ages *krita, treta, dvapara* and *kali,* the dice numbers in the dice play also are called by the names *krita, treta, dvapara,* and *kali*. This is only by way of example.

The point that is made out here is that Raikva was a very great person and Janasruti, the king, was nowhere before him. He was nobody compared to that great man. This was a pointed insult to the king no doubt, who was hearing it. He was all along feeling very happy and legitimately proud that he was doing his best in giving charity and leading a good life. But he was encountered with this very unpleasant conversation that went on in the sky between the birds. So he passed a restless night thinking

over this matter as to what sort of person Raikva would be, where he was, and whether he could see him. "What is the use of my charity, what is the use of my virtues, if all this that I do is nothing in comparison with others who are still greater than me?"—thus Janasruti was thinking in his mind.

5. *Tadu ha janasrutih pautrayana upasusrava, sa ha sanjihana eva ksattaram uvaca, angare ha sa-yugvanam iva raikvam attheti, yo nu katham sa-yugva raikva iti.*
6. *Yatha krtaya vijitayadhareyah samyanti, evam enam sarvam tad-abhisameti, yat kinca prajah sadhu kurvanti, yas-tadveda yat sa veda, sa mayaitad ukta iti.*

Kings wake up in the morning hearing the sounds of beautiful music and bards singing their glory. Janasruti when he woke up in the morning heard his glories being sung in his palace. On this particular morning he was not pleased. He was grieved, very unhappy, indeed. "What is the use of this praise?" thought he. He called his attendant, *ksatta,* and asked, "Do you praise me in the same way as one praises Raikva with the cart?" The idea was that the attendant should go and find out where that man was, and tell him that the king wanted him. That attendant asked, "Master, who is this Raikva? You ask me to go and search for him?" In a mood of irritation, as it were, the king simply repeated the very words he heard from the bird. "Just as the fourth cast in the dice includes every other cast, all the virtues of people are included in the virtues of this person. Whatever anybody knows, he also knows and what he

knows, that only others also know. This is the greatness of Raikva. There is nothing which he does not know, and no one can know what he does not know. Such a person you find out." Well, very astounding indeed! The *ksatta,* the attendant, went in search of Raikva in all the cities and in all important places.

7. *Sa ha ksattanvisya navidam iti pratyeyaya, tam hovaca yatrare brahmanasyanvesana tad-enam arccheti.*

He could not find a man of that kind anywhere. Raikva with a cart could not be discovered. So he came back to the king and said, "I cannot find him." The king said: "You search for such great people in cities and marketplaces? You should go to such places where great men live. Such men as Raikva will not live in cities. Go to solitary places, temples, river banks and such other sacred spots—isolated, sequestered regions. There alone such great people stay. Where knowers of Brahman would live, you know very well. Go there and search."

8. *So'dhastac-chakatasya pamanam kasamanam upopavivesa, tam habhyuvada, tvam nu bagavah sa-yugva raikva iti; aham hyare iti ha pratijajne; sa ha ksatta, avidam iti pratyeyaya.*

So this attendant went and after much searching found, in some corner of some village, one poor man sitting under a cart, scratching himself as if he had no other work to do, with no one around him, looking very strange indeed. Such a grotesque-looking person this attendant saw. He suspected this must be Raikva, as he was sitting near a cart. It was difficult to make out the connection between him

and the cart. Might be that was his only property. There are some people who move about with carts. They have no other property except a cart. Or, it might be by chance that he was sitting near a cart, but there must be some connection between him and the cart. Otherwise he would not be referred to as 'Raikva with the cart'. So naturally the attendant concluded that it belonged to him, and he was the person whom he was searching for.

Humbly and reverentially this attendant sat near the gentleman and asked him, "Are you Raikva with the cart?" "Yes fellow, I am that," he said in a very callous and careless manner.

So the attendant came back and told the king, "I have found him. He is in a corner of that village." The attendant might have told the name of that particular village.

Section 2

1. *Tad u ha janasrutih parutrayanah sat-satavni gavam niskam asvatari-rathacm tad-adaya praticakrame, tam habhyuvada.*
2. *Raikvemani sat satani gavam, ayam nisko'yam asvatarirathah, anu ma etam bhagavo devatam sadhi, yam devatam upassa iti.*

The king was very happy. He collected a lot of wealth and reverentially went to this great man sitting under a cart, scratching the eruptions on his skin. He took with him six hundred cows, a gold necklace, and a chariot driven by mules. He addressed Raikva: "O Great One, here are six hundred cows, here is a gold necklace, here is a chariot driven with mules. Please accept these things and initiate

me into the meditation on the deity whose worship you are performing, and on whom you are meditating. I want to be initiated into the great *vidya* which you possess, knowledge of that deity whom you have known." The great man was not pleased. He did not accept those gifts, nor was he prepared to give any initiation.

3. *Tam u ha parah pratyuvaca, aha haretva, sudra, tavaiva saha gobhir-astv-iti; tad-u ha punar-eva janasrutih pautrayanah sahasram gavam niskam asvatari-ratham duhitaram tad-adaya praticakrame.*

"O Sudra, take back all these things, useless man," he said, as if he was not at all interested in them. "Get away from here. Take your cows, your chariot and gold necklace. Do not talk to me." This was what he said.

The word 'sudra' mentioned here has been a target of great discussion in the Brahmasutras as to whether Sudras can be initiated into Brahma-Vidya. This is one of the points discussed in the *sutras* of Badarayana and much has been made of it by commentators. Sudra means a low caste belonging to the fourth category of the social order. Can such a person be initiated into Brahma-Vidya? Here is a context where the word 'sudra' occurs, and afterwards the person is initiated also. Well, the argument is very long and prolonged and it is not of much use to us to go into the intricacies. But the interpreters make out that 'sudra' does not mean a low-caste man, in this context. One who is sunk in grief is called a 'sudra'. This is the etymological meaning drawn out from the word 'sudra'. He was in great grief because he found that there was a person greater than him

and his knowledge was very little compared to the knowledge of the other one. So he was sorrow-stricken and he rushed immediately in the direction in which he could get this knowledge. He was a king and a Kshatriya. How could you call him a Sudra? So 'sudra' here does not mean a low caste man of the fourth order, but is only a symbolic, metaphorical way of referring to that person, indicating that he came in sorrow, in search of knowledge. This point is irrelevant to our subject, but anyway I made mention of it because it has been discussed in great detail in the Brahmasutras.

The king was grief-stricken. He went again with a larger quantity of wealth. This time he came with new things. He came with one thousand cows instead of the previous six hundred, the gold necklace, the chariot driven with mules, and he brought his daughter also to be offered to Raikva.

There is something between the lines which the Upanishad is silent about. There is a sudden shift of emphasis to the main question, from the descriptions of the king coming to the great man with all these offerings. Raikva felt that there was some sincerity in the king and that he had done something which ordinarily a person would not do. He was trying to offer his daughter to him. No ordinary man would do that. So there must be some tremendous sincerity in this person. He had come here a second time. If he was not sincere, he would have got fed up and gone back. He was not like the rich man who went to Jesus Christ and who was asked to sell everything he had and come back, but never did come back, because he did not want to sell everything. Janasruti was a person who was

very particular about the knowledge which he wanted to gain. So he made a proposal to offer that which ordinarily one would not offer. This was an occasion for Raikva to recognise the sincerity of this person.

4. *Tam habhyuvada, raikvedam sahasram gavam ayam nisko'yam asvatari-rathah, iym jayayam gramo yasmin-nasse anveva ma bhagavah sadhiti.*

"I have brought all these things. Will you kindly initiate me into the great deity on whom you are meditating, due to which you are so great that your glory is spreading to all the corners of the world? Will you kindly give this knowledge to me?" This was the prayer of the king.

There was another greater man than this king Janasruti and that was Janaka, who offered even himself as a servant to the great sage Yajnavalkya who initiated him into Brahma-Vidya. He offered the whole kingdom to the sage and he said, "Here I am as your slave." Such were our great kings in this country, who valued the wisdom of Reality much more than temporal wealth, renown, and greatness in this world. To that category belonged Janasruti also.

5. *Tasya ha mukham upodgrhnan-nuvaca ajaharemah sudra anenaiva mukhenalapayisyatha iti, te haite raikvaparna nama mahavrsesu yatrasma uvasa tasmai hovaca.*

"With all this that you have brought before me as the means, you want me to speak! Well, I shall speak, recognising your honesty and sincerity of purpose," said Raikva. The king was highly pleased at this condescending attitude of the great master and he gave him a set of villages

in charity. The king said: “O great one, this village, in which you are seated here, is yours. I give it as a gift.”

It appears he gave several villages. Those villages are called Raikva-parna, after the name of this great man, Raikva, in the country of Mahavrisha. So Raikva became rich in one moment with land, gold, attendants, and whatnot. The king also became richer by becoming the disciple of the great Raikva. Now the initiation was given by Raikva, the great master to the disciple, King Janasruti, into the mystery of meditation on the all-absorbing Being. Because of the character of all-absorption, this great Being on which Raikva was meditating is called *Samvarga.* It is a peculiar Upanishadic term which implies the absorbent into which everything enters, that which sucks everything into itself. That is *Samvarga.* There is a great ‘wind’ that blows everything into itself. Into that Raikva initiated the king. This is not the ordinary wind that blows here. It is not an ill wind that does good to no one, but it is a tremendous ‘wind’, a symbolic term used in respect of the great Reality on which Raikva was meditating. His meditation was on that which withdraws everything into itself, which blows over everything, and absorbs everything into itself. Raikva then spoke of this great knowledge to Janasruti.

SECTION 3

1. *Vayur-vava samvargah, yada va agnir-udvayati, vayum evapyeti, yada suryo’stam eti vayum evapyeti, yada candro’stam eti vayum evapyeti.*

Raikva said: “There is this great cosmic air or wind which is an absorbent of everything. Everything is absorbed

into it, everything rises from it, everything is maintained in it, and everything goes back into it. When the fire subsides, it goes into it. It is absorbed into this great wind that absorbs everything into itself. It is on this *Vayu,* the great deity, that I am meditating."

When you blow a lamp, where does the flame go? No one knows where it goes. That it is not the ordinary wind which is spoken of here, is clear from the fact that Raikva refers to it as an absorbent of even the sun himself. The sun cannot be absorbed by the ordinary wind. He says even the sun is absorbed when he moves in any particular direction, or sets. His rising in one place is equal to setting in another place. So the point is: what is it that makes the universe rotate or revolve in this manner? It is here referred to as cosmic 'wind' that blows in particular directions, compelling the planets, the stars and the sun to direct their courses in a given manner. Due to the fear of this Being, they are moving in a symmetrical fashion. The planets move around the sun, the sun is rushing towards the Milky Way, and so on and so forth. This is what we hear even in our modern scientific parlance. The fire burns due to fear of It and the rain falls due to fear of It. The sun also shines due to fear of this all-absorbent Air. Death performs its duty due to fear of It. This is the controlling central government, as it were, which is the object of meditation. The sun sets into It. If the sun and the moon rise and set and move in their orbits and maintain their position in a perfect manner, it is all due to this great Being, the absorbent of everything which, by its very existence, controls the movements of all things.

2. *Yadapa ucchusyanti, vayum-evapiyanti, vayur-hyevaitan sarvan samvrnkte, ity-adhidaivatam.*

When the water dries up, it goes there. It is this Being which absorbs the water into itself and makes water vanish into nothing, as it were. From the objective universal side, this is how the great deity, the cosmic air which blows everything into itself, is described.

Now from the internal microcosmic side also, it is being described.

3. *Athadhyatam prano vava samvargah, sa yada svapiti pranam eva vag-apyeti, pranam caksuh pranam srotram pranam manah prano hyevaitan sarvan samvrnkte iti.*

Just as in the universal it is called air which absorbs everything into itself and dries up every effect into itself as the cause, so in the individual also it works in a similar manner, and it is called *prana.* When you go to sleep the mind is withdrawn by the action of the *prana.* The *prana* draws the mind into itself. The speech and the senses are all drawn into it. Every organ, whether it is eye, or ear, or any other which operates in the waking condition, is also withdrawn. All these are regulated by this Supreme Principle which works as *prana* inside. It controls everything and draws everything into itself. So it works outside and also inside. It is the *brahmanda* and the *pindanda.* It is the macrocosm and also the microcosm.

4. *Tau va etau dvau samvargau, vayur-eva devesu, pranah pranesu.*

These are the two great absorbents in the whole cosmos. Inwardly it is the *prana* that works as the absorbent of all

effects into itself, and outwardly it is air, the cosmic *prana,* the *sutratman, hiranyagarbha* which absorbs everything into itself. These two have to be brought together in conjunction in this meditation, as is the case with the Sandilya-Vidya to which we have made reference earlier. The inward and outward have to come together in meditation and be envisaged as one single Reality. Among the gods it is *Vayu* and among the senses and the internal functionaries it is the *prana.* This is the initiation.

The initiation is now over and Janasruti must have understood the import of it, as we are told nothing further as to what happened to him later on.

In ancient times, initiations into mysteries of this kind were not regarded as mere teachings in the ordinary sense. One would be surprised in modern times at the very easy way in which the Supreme Knowledge was communicated to people by the great masters through such simple instructions as this. Even if we hear these things one thousand times, we are not going to be benefited by it. The point is, how it is taught, who teaches, and to whom it is taught. What is taught of course we know very well. But the other factors should not be ignored. The receptive capacity of the disciple, the intellectual calibre that is behind it, the need felt for this knowledge by the individual concerned, and the circumstances which govern the entire process of initiation are more important factors than a mere parrot-like repetition of the words. Initiation is not mere utterance of words. It is a communication of an energy, a force. It is the will of the Guru, as it were, entering into the will of the disciple, where both have to be on the same level.

Otherwise, there cannot be initiation. This is a short initiation, the meaning of which cannot be clear outwardly by mere reading the words thereof. But, it is a fund of wisdom taking the mind deep into the mysteries of creation and the Reality as such, into which the great Raikva, the so-called poor man, initiated the great King Janasruti Pautrayana, about which another story is mentioned here which we shall now take up.

There was a *brahmacharin* who was a great meditator on the *Samvarga,* a practicant who worshipped this great deity, into the knowledge of which Raikva initiated King Janasruti. This *brahmacharin,* who was a disciplined student of this *vidya,* a great meditator and a seeker who felt that he had practically identified with the deity on account of the depth of his meditation, one day went about begging for food. He happened to go to the abode of two renowned persons. At the time of his approach, they were just being served their meal. So he asked for food from those two persons who were sitting for their meal, but they turned a deaf ear to this man's asking. No food was given. They kept quiet as if nothing was happening. This is an anecdote once again introducing us into another aspect of the same Samvarga-Vidya.

5. *Atha ha saunakam ca kapeyam abhipratarinam ca kaksasenim parivisyamanau brahmacari bibhikse, tasma u ha na dadatuh.*

The Upanishad says that two great men, Saunaka and Abhipratarin, were about to sit for their meal, and a celibate student who was practising meditation in the Samvarga-Vidya approached them and begged for food. They would

not give food to this person who asked for alms. Now, observing that he was not being given food and these great men were about to ignore his very presence altogether, the *brahmacharin* made the following statement in their presence.

6. *Sa hovaca:*
   mahatmanas-caturo deva ekah kah sa jagara bhuvanasya gopah, tam kapeya nabhipasyanti martyah abhipratarin bahudha vasantam.yasmai va etad-annam, tasma etan-na dattam iti.

The *brahmacharin* said: "You, gentlemen, great ones, who are about to take your lunch here, Saunaka and Abhipratarin, please listen to what I am saying. There is one great god who swallows up four others. Who is this god? He is the protector of all the worlds. No one beholds the presence of this great god. O Saunaka and Abhipratarin, you two great ones do not realise that all the food of this world belongs to this god, and it is to this god that you have refused food."

This is literally what the *brahmacharin* said. Here, something else seems to be in his mind when he made the statement. He was a great meditator, no doubt, and a meditator in an advanced stage. He was practically identical with the deity on which he meditated. He had in him the power of the deity, and to a large extent, he could do whatever the deity can do. Now this deity is the Universal Being, the great *Samvarga.* And when the worshipper who had through meditation identified himself with the deity asked for food, it was as if God himself was asking for food. It is as if the deity was asking for alms.

"The entire food of all creation belongs to that Deity only, and when It is asking for the food which belongs to It by right, you great men do not give it! So you understand the consequences of your action. You have done a great offence in ignoring my presence. You did not at all listen to what I am saying. You have not given me the food I asked for and you are keeping quiet as if nothing is happening. Now be prepared for the consequences of this ignorance on your part in regard to this great Deity," said the *brahmacharin*.

By this the *brahmacharin* meant that he himself was the deity manifest there in an embodied form. So it was a kind of threat he administered to the two persons who were about to take food by themselves without giving it to him who had asked for the same. Well, the consequences were serious, no doubt, if what he said was correct. They would be finished if the deity was wrath with them. This was, of course, the intention behind the enigmatic remark made in a threatening way by the *brahmacharin* who was refused food. After the *brahmacharin* spoke like this, Saunaka, one of the two who were seated there, got up.

7. *Tad u ha saunakah kapeyah pratimanvanah pratyeyaya atma devanam janita prajanam, hiranya-damstro babhaso'nasurih mahantam asya mahimanam ahuh, anadya-mano yad-anannam atti iti vai vayam brahmacarin nedam upasmahe, dattasmai bhiksamiti.*

Saunaka approached the *brahmacharin* and replied: "You are saying that food has been refused to the great deity, the all-pervading one. Listen to what I have to say on

this. You are speaking like this because you are under the impression that you are a meditator on the *Samvarga* and that we know nothing about it. You made a remark that we are ignorant of the presence of this great god to whom all the food belongs. Then what is it that we are meditating on? I will tell you. There is a great Soul, the Self of all beings, the source and essence of all the gods, the creator, the progenitor of all things. He is the one who eats through the mouth of knowledge itself. It is not an ordinary mouth with physical teeth and physical tongue. He has teeth which are shining with the lustre of knowledge. It is the essence of knowledge which is the essence of His being and He swallows all things. He is a great devourer. There is nothing in creation which He cannot devour. Everything is food for him and He consumes it through his own being, not through any external instrument. He is the wisest of all existences. His glory is great indeed. He cannot be eaten or swallowed by anybody, or not even affected in the least by anyone, or contacted and contaminated by any other in any manner whatsoever. But to Him everything is food. He eats non-food also, not only the ordinary food. The eaters themselves are eaten up by Him. This is what we are meditating upon." Having made this remark he told his servants, "Please give this boy food."

This conversation conceals something very interesting. Its meaning is very hard to comprehend. We can however follow the interpreters and the commentators and make out, to some extent, the sense implied in this conversation. The implication of this discourse between the two parties seems to be that from the point of view of the

brahmacharin it was wrong on the part of the other two persons to ignore his presence altogether and pay no heed to his request for food, especially as it was well-known that he was no ordinary person, having attuned himself to the cosmic deity. That was his point of view. The point of view of the others who retorted in reply seems to be that they were not so ignorant as he imagined them to be. But, what is the point in refusing food to him? There must be some reason behind it. There is a meaning which we have to read into the words of the scripture to understand the reason. What we are told is that they merely wanted to test the *brahmacharin* to find out his depth of knowledge and the stuff out of which he was made. So they gave a reply which suggested that they possessed a knowledge, perhaps comparatively superior to his own knowledge.

In what way was it superior? This superiority is only suggestive and it is not openly stated. *Samvarga* is cosmic as well as individual, as it has been told in the earlier *mantras*. As the cosmic counterpart it is *Vayu,* and as it functions in the individual it is *prana.* Now, the four great ones who were swallowed up by the god, as the *brahmacharin* pointed out, are the other lesser deities,—the fire, the sun, the moon and the water who are all comprehended in the being of *Vayu, Hiranyagarbha,* the Supreme Reality. In the individual aspect also He is devourer of four things that are inferior to the *prana,* namely eye, ear, mind and speech. It is possible for such a meditator to have a mistaken notion that the cosmic is different in some way or other from the individual, or at least that there is a line of demarcation between the universal and the particular. In spite of the fact

that the two are one, there seems to be a suggested difference between the outer and the inner, *vayu* and *prana.* But in the meditation that Saunaka and his friend practised, this difference seems to be obliterated completely, because they seem to be contemplating on that Being who has not this suggested difference between the outer and the inner, the cosmic and the individual, but is one single Reality. This can be the implication of the reply given by Saunaka to the *brahmacharin.*

"Well, anyway we have tested you. You are a good boy; take food." This seems to be the final conclusion of Saunaka who told the servant to give him food. Or, it may be that there is no such implied meaning. Their intention might not be to suggest that there is some defect in the meditation of the *brahmacharin.* Perhaps it was merely a kind of examination that they conducted in respect of him. Whatever it is, the whole section is a glorification of Samvarga-Vidya and also a *phalasruti,* making out that the exalted effect of this meditation is identity with the deity. One becomes possessed of the same power as is possessed by the deity. He becomes self-confident, and whatever is subject to the domain of the deity is subject to the rule and will of this meditator also. He becomes a superior person in every manner as the deity itself is. This is in the form of a sequel, a glorifying conclusion of the section dealing with Samvarga-Vidya In this Upanishad.

8. *Tasma u ha daduh, te va ete pancanye pancanye dasa santastat krtam, tasmat sarvesu diksv-annam eva dasa krtam, saisa virad-arnnadi, tayedam*

sarvam drstam, sarvam asyodam drstam bhavati,
annado bhavati, ya evam veda, ya evam veda.

So they gave him food. Now follows a very complicated passage. It is peculiarly archaic, as many of the *mantras* in the Vedas and the Upanishads are. I give you merely the literal translation of what it is. This five and the other five make ten. This is the enigmatic meaning of this sentence. This is called the *krita.* Therefore, food comes from all the ten directions. The *Virat* is the eater of everything. Whatever it sees, it eats. The food itself is the eater of food. This is the effect that follows in respect of anyone who knows this secret.

Now, what do we make out of this? We cannot make out any sense if we read it literally like that. But it has a significant mystical meaning. The five are the eater and five are the eaten. The eater is *Vayu* cosmically, the absorber, the supreme deity into which everything enters. The other four are the articles of diet for this supreme deity. According to some it is fire, sun, moon and water. If we do not want it to be so complicated, we may say that they are the four elements,—ether, fire, water and earth which are absorbed into this Supreme Absorber. Inwardly the *prana* is the eater, and the food is the sense-organs, speech, eye, ear and mind. So the four items which are regarded as food or which are the eaten, together with the eater, constitute the five. The five in the macrocosm and the five in the microcosm make ten. And this is the *krita.*

Here, *krita* is another difficult word. As we said earlier, it is the name of a cast of dice in a game. There are numbers inscribed on this cast and they are four, three, two and one.

Now if you add up these numbers, four, three, two and one, they make ten. So it is said that even as all the numbers together on the dice make number ten, likewise, outwardly and inwardly, this deity together with the stuff that is eaten by it constitutes ten.

Another very interesting word that is mentioned here is *virat*. In the Veda, *virat* is a metre which has ten letters. So there is a comparison introduced here between the metre *virat* having ten letters, and the number ten which has association with the deity as the eater of food and the eaten, and also the total number in the *krita,* the dice cast which is ten. Or, in a more general way, it means *Virat,* the cosmic Person, is the All-Being, the most comprehensive Reality to which everything is food. In the *Virat* you cannot say which is the eater and which is the eaten. There is no object-subject difference in the *Virat*. Food flows from all directions to the *Virat* and in the form of the *Virat*. The *Virat* is the name that we give to the all-comprehensive Reality where subject-object distinction cannot be made, as it is no more. The seer and the seen are indistinguishable. There is no difference between the eater and the eaten. The eaten itself is the eater, and the eater is the eaten. We can look at it either way. Whatever perceives is the stuff that is eaten, and whatever is eaten is also that which perceives. One who knows this mystery also becomes like this. What is this mystery will be clear to anyone who has read and understood these passages.

Here we conclude the Samvarga-Vidya with which we also conclude our study of the Chhandogya Upanishad. We

have covered practically every essential point in the prominent sections of the Chhandogya Upanishad.